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ABSTRACT

These four annual issues of WILLA (Women in Literature and Life Assembly) presents articles that focus on the crucial issues regarding the status and image of women and girls in every educational setting, from pre-kindergarten to continuing education. Articles and poetry in the first issue are: "On the Twentieth Anniversary of the Founding on NCTE's Women's Committee" (Aileen Pace Nilsen); "Remembering the Women" (Jeanne M. Gerlach); "The Acquisitive Maiden" (Maryjane O'Connor); "A Literary Life" (Jane Maher); "Talk among Chicks" (Marcia Worth); "The Princess and the Pea" (Nadine Charity); "Interview with Janie Hydrick" (Sandy DeCosta); "Rose Macaulay's 'And No Man's Wit' and Ernest Hemingway's 'For Whom the Bell Tolls': Two Spanish Civil War Novels and Question of Canonicity" (D. A. Boxwell); "The Transformational Rhetoric of Photography in Sue Miller's 'Family Pictures'" (Brenda O. Daly); "A Mermaid's Song" (Sondra Melzer); "Teaching Ain't No Joke: The Trap of Domesticity for Women Professors" (Lana Hartman Landon); "Hanging Up My Bones to Dry" (Betty Hart); "The Definition of Self, the Recognition of Other in Two Children's Stories" (Mary Elizabeth Bezanson and Deborah L. Norland); and "The Burden of Truth: The Voices of Luciela and Mattie in Gloria Naylor's 'Luciela Louise Turner'" (Demetrice A. Worley). Articles and poetry in the second issue include: "The House That Jack and Jane Rebuilt: Why Patching the Foundation Won't Support the Structure" (Judith Stitzel); "An Interview with Ruth K. J. Cline" (Lynne Alvine); "Some Observations about Hawthorne's Women" (Barbara Ellis); "When Is a Singing School (Not) a Chorus? The Emancipatory Agenda in Feminist Pedagogy and Literature Education" (Deanne Bogdan); "An Ethnic Passage: An Italian-American Woman in Academia" (Maryann S. Feola); "Community, Stereotype, and Insanity: Eliot's 'Adam Bede' and Dickens' 'Great Expectations'" (Julianne White); and "Bitch Goddess in Academia: Restructuring the Canon at Norman Mailer University" (Maria Bruno). Articles

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and poetry in the third issue include: "Beauty and the Beast--Wedding Still Pending: Male-Female Integration in the Legendary Fable" (Elouise Bell); "It's a Long Lane That Has No Turning" (Barbara Dreher); "Casey Miller and Kate Swift: Women Who Dared To Disturb the Lexicon" (Elizabeth Isele); "Bearing Witness" (Martha Marinara); "Feminist and Other(?) Pleasures" (Alayne Sullivan); "This Thing of Memory" (Andrena Zawinski); "Kate Chopin's 'Lilacs' and the Story of the Annunciation" (Jacqueline Olson Padgett); "The Question of the Personal: 'Woman' in the Academy" (Carol L. Winkelmann); and "Teaching Ain't No Joke: A Response" (Allison McCormack and Kathryn C. Lacey). Articles and poetry in the fourth issue include: "Psychological Safety of Women on Campus: A Collaborative Approach" (Lynn Butler-Kisber); "Lost and Found in Space: Using Tillie Olsen's 'I Stand Here Ironing' To Encourage Resistance and Identification in the Introductory Literature Classroom" (Linda Cullum); "Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Feminization of Education" (Deborah M. De Simone); "Writing with a Gun to My Head: Reflections on a Writers' Group, Teaching Writing, and the Creative Process" (Dawn Haines); and "Behind the 'Barred Windows': The Imprisonment of Women's Bodies and Minds in Nineteenth-Century America" (Michelle Mock Murton). (RS)

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WILLA, 1992-1995

Jo Gillikin and Fran Holman Johnson, Editors

Volumes 1-4

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WILA

- INTERVIEW WITH JANIE HYDRICK, NCTE PRESIDENT-ELECT
- A LITERARY LIFE
- TEACHING AIN'T NO JOKE: THE TRAP OF DOMESTICITY FOR WOMEN PROFESSORS

volume 1
fall 1992

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WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND LIFE ASSEMBLY

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

WILLA

Fall 1992 Publication

of

The Women in Literature and Life Assembly

of

The National Council of Teachers of English

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CALL FOR PAPERS for the second issue of *WILLA*, the journal of the NCTE Women in Literature and Life Assembly: The editors encourage varied perspectives, formats, and voices. Contributions should focus on the status and the image of women. Contributions might include critical essays, teaching strategies for all levels, bibliographies, personal essays, and other creative works. Each should be no more than twelve double-spaced, typed pages. Three copies of the submissions should be sent. Include word count and a self-addressed envelope to which stamps are clipped. Please use MLA style. Author's name and institutional affiliation should not appear on the manuscript. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged promptly if a self-addressed, stamped card or envelope is included. Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is February 1, 1993. Mail to: *WILLA*, Fran Holman Johnson, Editor, P. O. Box 3161, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, LA 71272.

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The staff, the Assembly, and NCTE do not necessarily endorse the views presented in the journal.

From the Editors

Welcome to the first issue of *WILLA*, the journal of the newly formed Women in Literature and Life Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English. *WILLA*, as assembly and as journal, is preceded by decades of history and was founded by a core group of eight members of the Committee of Women in the Profession. We were two of the eight who in the summer of 1991 journeyed to Nags Head, North Carolina, "to [break] up the sod of a new land." Like Antonia, we vacillated from feeling "erased, blotted out" to "happiness [in being] dissolved into something complete." We wish to pay tribute to the others: Lynne Alvine, Betty Hart, Nancy Huse, Irene Myles, Silver Stanfill, and Jeanne Gerlach to whom this initial issue is dedicated.

At the Atlanta convention, as we met informally over lunch, we began to think of names for the assembly and the journal, knowing that naming is mother to the child. Combining aims and admiration, we denominated ourselves *WILLA* after the latest woman author to be canonized -- not that at least half her readers hadn't known all along that Cather was sufficiently sainted literarily. It's just good to know that the other half appreciates her too. Of course, the word *canon* brings up one of the issues crucial to us: who's in, who's out, and why women and girls are so often out.

WILLA was founded in order to sustain focus on the crucial issues regarding the status and image of women and girls in every educational setting, both inside and outside the classroom. It is appropriate that Cather be the foremother of this publication inasmuch as Cather, who was early in her career a high school teacher, gives voice to all that is elemental: emotion and intellect; duality and correspondence; economy and exuberance; faith and doubt; love and hate; life and death. Although much has been done to validate and valorize the ways of writing and reading and the feeling of women and girls in literature and life since Cather's day, an organized sense of direction and a national forum for today's varied voices are needed. Within the pages of this issue, you will find writings by elementary, secondary, and college teachers as well as non-teachers. *WILLA* encourages a spirit of cooperation and respect for diverse kinds of discourse, perspectives, and writings.

Under the auspices of an early women's committee of NCTE came the historic "Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language" (originally published in 1975; revised in 1985). However, as you will see in "Talk Among Chicks" in this issue, the use of language to demean females has not disappeared. We believe that some books and articles here and some speeches and guidelines there will not eliminate sexual inequality in the classroom or in life. And as much as we like Grimms Fairy Tales, we must look at the consequences of myths that bind us. Could there be a tie-in between our teaching of Sleeping Beauty and the fact that there are over 1,500 deaths a year from anorexia bulimia? If we don't want to give up literature we love, can we at least examine what its effects are upon us and the way it teaches us to be so that we can intelligently decide how to approach literature in the future? We further believe that there are works of literature about the lives of women and girls that are fun to read and to teach and that concomitantly provide positive learning experiences for women and men, girls and boys.

For this first issue of *WILLA*, we are pleased to present an interview with Janie Hydrick, NCTE President-elect. We are pleased because this interview represents a concretization of our hope that *WILLA* will be inclusive of all levels of educational experience from pre-kindergarten to continuing education. In fact, the journal features columns from the elementary, the secondary, and the collegiate perspectives.

Norland and Bezanson's essay on one children's classic, *The Giving Tree*, provides another way of looking at a literary treasure by comparing and contrasting it with *The Mountain That Loved a Tree*. There is no suggestion here of tossing out the classics and replacing them with new ones. It is, rather, a matter of what happens when a work that has been unjustly neglected is placed beside a classic. For example, consider Boxwell's essay juxtaposing Ernest Hemingway and Rose Macaulay -- or teaching *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*.

Contemporary works of fiction are analyzed by Brenda Daly and Demetrice Worley. The dysfunctional family, its causes, and its means of survival are the subject of Daly's essay. Worley's critical essay shows how two women of color survive crisis through the historical motherline. Another view of family is presented in Jane Maher's "A Literary Life," a witty account of the effect of the educational establishment on her and her family.

Aileen Pace Nilsen and Jeanne Gerlach provide historical background for *WILLA*, while Lana Hartman Landon and Marcia Lynn Worth provide glimpses of present-day realities regarding the status of women. This issue also includes poems by Charity, Hart, O'Connor, and Meltzer.

The works which appear in this issue have been reviewed by the co-editors, by other editorial representatives and committee members of *WILLA*, and by the writers' peers. The editors encourage and will publish in future issues of *WILLA*, as space permits, mindful responses of its readers. (See call for papers for address.)

Finally, we acknowledge our indebtedness to the many people who have assisted us. NCTE, the *WILLA* editorial staff, Executive Board members, and readers; Louisiana Tech, President Dan Reneau, Dr. Joe Strother, Mr. Jonathan Donohoe, and Mr. Robert Meredith; publisher B.F. Graphics; family and friends -- all magnanimously contributed to the premiere issue of *WILLA*.

Jo Gilliken

Jean Holman Johnson

Sandy DeCosta
Elementary School Editor

WILLA, the newest NCTE journal, has been created to provide a forum for research, book reviews, classroom teaching ideas, and continuing discussions of women and girls in conjunction with reading and the language arts.

Too little has been written about gender issues relevant to these early years, particularly in relation to the language arts areas. Yet we know that gender roles and gender expectations in children's literature, on television, in textbooks, and in classroom practice create assumptions which shape attitudes and sustain behaviors that are retained through adulthood. The cumulative effects are that young girls eventually become convinced of their limitations and marginality, while young boys are socialized to succeed.

S. Nieto (1992) writes of Yolanda, a young Mexican-American girl who reflects confusion about her family's expectations of her. She says she will never marry, rejecting family and its attendant problems, while thinking this is a liberating decision. But she has decided to become a flight attendant which she describes as a "kind of maid." Yolanda has already learned that she was born to serve--she has merely opted to perform it in a more "glamorous" or less conventional setting. She has no grand illusions about tasks she will have to perform.

Mulac, Studley, and Blau (1990) found evidence of differences in the language behavior exhibited in the writing of male and female students. These gender-linked language effects were fully developed by the time students were 9-10 years of age. "The similarity of this effect with sex role stereotypes suggests the possibility that such language-based judgments help reinforce the stereotypes, which might in turn indirectly influence language use," pp. 465-66.

Children's literature is being viewed more critically for evidence of racism and sexism. The Council on Inter-Racial Books for Children (CIBC) produced *Guidelines for Selecting Bias Free Textbooks and Storybooks* in 1990. While this is a very valuable tool for parents and educators, it hasn't awakened many who do not yet acknowledge the existence and/or the influence of gender stereotyping. Unfortunately, it doesn't respond to the widespread use of so many of the literature classics for children which have for generations created clear pictures of gender roles.

Sadker, Sadker, and Klein (1991) report on the findings of a recent (1985) study by Scott and Schau regarding the impact of instructional materials on readers' attitudes. Their findings included:

> (1) Exposure to sexist materials may increase sex-typed attitudes, especially among young children; (2) exposure to sex equitable materials and to same-sex characters results in decreased sex-typed attitudes in students from 3 to at least 22 years of age; (3) the effects of sex equitable materials do not usually generalize to areas specifically covered in the materials, especially for pre-school and elementary age students, although there may be some generalizations for older students, especially those who are initially more s e x - typed; and (4) attitude change toward equity increased with increased exposure. (p.279)

These few studies alone demonstrate our need to respond on behalf of children growing up with distorted feelings and beliefs. I hope you will feel compelled to join us in making parents, teachers, colleagues, and ourselves more keenly aware of and will actively share in our efforts to shape new directions.

Pat Bloodgood
Secondary School Editor

It is my hope that high school teachers interested in women in literature and life will not only join WILLA, but will share with their peers to promote better understanding of the role of women in education.

We know that many members of NCTE are already strong advocates; the presentations at the '91 convention in Seattle reflected this interest. There were about ten topics which focused on women, e.g., "Women's Ways of Learning, Writing, and Teaching"; "Issues in Gender and Writing"; "Hear Our Voices, Know Our Needs." If these presentations were as well received as the two I attended, there is a real need for more communication than that provided at an annual convention. The two presentations I saw were SRO, although "Literary Voices: The Female Protagonist" was assigned to a miniscule room. One of this group of speakers was Sorel Berman, who presented a comprehensive paper on the literary contributions of Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Anzia Yezierska, Zora Neale Hurston, and Maya Angelou. Another presenter, Barbara Freiberg, deftly intertwined two amazing 19th century females in "Kate Chopin and Mary Cassatt: Twentieth Century Women in a Nineteenth Century World." The large audiences and the enthusiastic reception at both of these reflect an enormous interest in the subject of women in literature and life.

Consider this column a call for manuscripts, syllabi, teaching techniques, or full lessons which focus on women in literature or life. There may be work issues that we need to address. Any concern of yours should be a concern of ours in this area. We want to see WILLA become one of the first links of communication among high school teachers interested in these subjects.

Nancy Huse
College Editor

> A word after a word
> after a word is power.
> --Margaret Atwood "Spelling" (1981)

Women's Studies. Race, Class, Gender. Feminist Theory. Gay and Lesbian Studies. Poststructuralism. Empowerment.

I teach in a world reshaped by those words. While exploring feminist theory in a senior-level course, selecting topics and texts for Children's Literature and Adolescent Literature syllabi, or reconstructing American Literature to focus on Meridel LeSueur, Charles Chesnutt, and other "new" writers, I draw on the vital and diversified set of understandings defining this era and my life as a teacher. Sometimes I move far afield, studying women's world-wide dialogue in a course we call Global Issues in Women's Studies. Outside of class the vocabulary of feminism and the elusive reality it evokes spark the conversations I have with students and colleagues. True, there are students who want to know why we can't just have an adolescent literature class without the contexts supplied by feminism. Who cares, for example, how gender and war are related or how women remember war or how they/we have worked in it or against it? Thus, why read Ella Leffland and Vera Brittain? And there are numerous colleagues who think knowledge is value-free, and others who see feminist work as one narrow intellectual tradition, rather than a diverse and transformative paradigm. Despite resistances and differences among ourselves, feminist English teachers aren't rare--witness the scholarship, witness the conference sessions, witness the backlash.

Teaching English the way I transact the texts of our discipline demands that we learn from, participate in the intellectual life of our culture. Every year, I place lovingly in future teachers' hands Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* (1938, 1983). For there it is: the struggle for freedom, for community, for life informed by knowledge and by a visionary ideal expressed in an epistemology of private-public interconnectedness. Teaching English by such a method is an act of furthering the discourses of empowerment.

Women's Studies isn't, of course, neatly interchangeable with English as we have known it. It has a clearer requirement for action in what we in the academy call "the world." No matter how interesting it is to study the writings of women and the scholarship of feminists, ***CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.***

On the Twentieth Anniversary of the Founding of NCTE's Women's Committee

By Aileen Pace Nilsen

On the twentieth anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival, television, radio, magazine, and newspaper reporters searched out participants for interviews on how they felt their revolution had gone. And although the world hasn't exactly been waiting for a report on the twentieth anniversary of the founding of NCTE's Women's Committee, I, nevertheless, find myself sharing similar emotions with the Woodstock survivors: nostalgia for those heady days of total commitment, a sense of loss that twenty years have gone so quickly, and a feeling of surprise both at how much and how little the world has changed.

The NCTE Executive group approved the founding of the Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and the Profession (soon shortened to "The Women's Committee") at the Las Vegas convention in November of 1971 and appointed Janet Emig as the first chair. The program did not list a formal Committee meeting; instead, there was a discussion group on "The Status of Women in the Teaching Profession." Several speakers became important in the early work of the Committee including Elisabeth McPherson from Forest Park Community College in Missouri; Lou Kelly from the University of Iowa; Alpha Quincy from Mt. Diablo Unified School District in Concord, California; and Nancy Lauter from NCTE headquarters. Two men, John F. Knoll from Sagamon State University and Louis A. Schuster, S.M., from United College of San Antonio, were also on the panel.

I didn't get to attend this session because this was the infamous year that several of the Las Vegas hotels didn't honor the reservations of English teachers--undoubtedly we weren't considered high rollers. My most memorable moment at the conference was trying to register at the convention hotel and realizing that the elegant, strong-willed, and very irritated woman in front of me was Lou LaBrant. I later heard that someone stole the fur piece that first caught my eye and that she never came to another NCTE convention. I didn't speak to her--she was in no mood for social chatting--but it was a thrill for me to see this woman whose name plays such a part in the history of English Education. I've no idea where she laid her head that night. Fortunately for me, my parents had driven up from Arizona for a quick visit, and slept in their camper and was glad I didn't have to pay for the hotel.

The first documentation of the Women's Committee appears in the 1972 *Annual Report* where Janet Emig wrote:

> As chairperson of the NCTE Committee on Women (short title) established at the 1971 Las Vegas convention, I have spent the year trying to form a committee that accurately represents not only women in the four-year colleges and universities but also the range of women who teach the language arts and English in the elementary and secondary schools and in the two-year colleges. I have sought diversity in age, race, geography, academic level, and nature of academic responsibility (because of the nature of professional sexism, women administrators are the most difficult to find: we have on the committee one of the very few women principals in the New York City system).

In addition to the women named above from the Las Vegas program, members included Evelyn M. Copeland, Fairfield public schools; Vivian Davis, Texas Technical University; Marian E. Musgrave, Miami University; Esther Rothman, Livingston School in New York City; Sarah Youngblood, Mt. Holyoke College; and Iris Tiedt, University of Santa Clara. Tiedt, editor of *Elementary English*, began immediately to prepare a special issue which appeared in October of 1973 on the topic of women, girls, and the language arts curriculum.

In explaining why no men were on the committee, Emig quoted form an interview with Simone de Beauvoir:

> First, if men were admitted to these groups, they wouldn't be able to restrain their masculine compulsion to dominate, to impose. At the same time, many women, consciously or unconsciously, still have certain feelings of inferiority, a certain timidity; many women would not dare to express themselves freely in front of men. Specifically, it is vital that they should not feel judged by the individual men who share their individual lives, because they also need to liberate themselves from them. For the moment, neither men's nor women's mentalities permit really honest discussion in mixed groups. (*Ms. Magazine*, July, 1972)

Emig hastened to add that "This is not to say that any of the members of this committee are troubled by timidity or feelings of inferiority!"

In a telephone interview (April 3, 1991), Emig commented on the close connections between the development of the NCTE Women's Committee and the Modern Language Association Commission on Women. One of the traumas of my marriage was going to MLA in 1970 and having my husband, Don, asked to leave one of the meetings. He has never really forgiven the women's movement because he had been invited to the meeting as a program participant. He had consented to be the recorder for the session where I was giving a paper on "Women in Children's Literature," and it had been at considerable sacrifice that we had arranged to come a night early and leave our children (ages 8, 10, and 12) alone in the hotel room while we came to the meeting. We had thought it was to be a preparation meeting for the next day's program, but instead it was consciousness raising. I couldn't really concentrate because I was so perplexed in trying to figure out who was responsible for creating a chilly climate and for whom?

> *In the annual report for that year, Janet Emig wrote that "Margaret Mead characterized the meeting as the most intelligent and stimulating session on women in which she had ever participated."*

Even though we did not have men as members of the NCTE Women's Committee, we gratefully accepted--or maybe "finagled" is a better work--support from many men. For exam-

ple, my biggest contribution to the work of the women's Committee was editing *Sexism and Language*, a book proposed as a joint venture between the Women's and the Doublespeak committees. My husband was a member of the Doublespeak committee and volunteered my services. And it was probably more than a coincidence that *College English* editor Richard Ohmann decided to devote the May 1971 issue of his journal to the publication of the papers on feminist issues that had been given at MLA the December before. One of the papers, "Emily Bronte in the Hands of Male Critics," was by his wife Carol Ohmann. For wider distribution, the issue (with one additional article) was later published by NCTE as a monograph, *A Case for Equity: Women in English Departments*, edited by Susan McAllester, *College English* editorial associate.

Another collaborative effort between the women of NCTE and of MLA was the planning of a three-hour panel discussion for the 1972 NCTE annual convention in Minneapolis. This was the convention where the Women's Committee first met in an official capacity, but it was the panel presentation rather than the committee meeting which drew the most attention. Participants included Margaret Mead, from the museum of Natural History; Florence Howe, president of MLA; Elaine Reuben, University of Wisconsin; Charlotte Croman, City University of New York; and Harriet W. Sheridan, Carleton College. In the annual report for that year, Janet Emig wrote that "Margaret Mead characterized the meeting as the most intelligent and stimulating session on women in which she had ever participated."

The following February, the Women's Committee met for two days at the Palmer House in Chicago with expenses paid for by the NCTE Executive Committee. The chief outcome of the two-day meeting was a decision to produce a series of guidelines in key areas involving professional women: publications, programs, textbooks, teaching and teacher preparation, women's and girls' studies, and the profession itself. The first to be prepared was the one on publications, which was ready for distribution at the 1973 CCCC convention. The MLA women's committee also distributed 3,000 copies in addition to the thousands sent out by NCTE.

Some of the suggestions were offered to editors and editorial boards:

-- Solicit and publish articles dealing with women's problems.

-- Ensure a fair balance of articles by women as well as for and about them.

-- Refuse advertising which discriminates against women or which purports to be representative when, in fact, it isn't.

-- Become consciously aware of unconscious sexist bias and hidden assumptions in every manuscript, whatever its subject matter.

-- Refuse to publish articles which contain such hidden biases and assumptions, not to limit controversy, but to see that conflicting views are presented openly.

Readers were encouraged to:

-- Watch for expressed and implied sexist biases and assumptions in language choice in comments about women's roles.

-- Protest biased articles with letters to the editor, to the organization that sponsors the publication, and to the author.

-- Congratulate editors who adopt these guidelines and praise them when they print good material on the role and image women.

The *Guidelines for Women's Studies Grades 1-12*, which came out in 1974, were unusual in focusing on women's studies in elementary and high school rather than at the college level. All the guidelines made the point that "Bias flourishes less from ill will than from ignorance," and in this leaflet, the writers were extra careful to say "We are not asking that the classroom become a propaganda organ for women's rights: we are only asking that it not be, consciously or unconsciously, an advocate for current negative conditions and attitudes."

New committee members joining in time for the Minneapolis and the Chicago meetings included Carolyn Allen, University of Washington; Johanna di Stephano (soon to be named chair), Ohio State University; Audrey Brown, Joseph Sears School in Kenilworth, Illinois; Sandi Gilley, Fort Wingate High School in New Mexico; and Janet Sutherland, Interlake High School in Bellevue, Washington.

The 1973 NCTE convention was in Philadelphia, and this was the first formal meeting of the Women's Committee that I attended. We made plans to propose a pre-convention workshop for the next year in New Orleans. I offered to put together something on sexism and language, the topic of my dissertation that I had just defended at the University of Iowa on my way from Arizona to Philadelphia.

The next year when it was time to go to New Orleans, my husband was nervous about staying home with the children for a whole week. He had reason to be since our youngest child was (and is) a brittle diabetic, and her care is a serious responsibility. I almost cancelled out on my NCTE commitment, but we finally decided to drive our station wagon and take the family. I turned in my airplane ticket for a refund and rewrote my part of the workshop to "Ms. and Mr. Nilsen Debate Sexism" (later published in *Elementary English*, May 1975). This decision to drive 3,000 miles rather than to send my regrets was a milestone in the way both I and my family would view my career. Even though I had finished my Ph.D., I was not yet in a job where service at the national level was either encouraged or appreciated, and so I had qualms as to whether I was being selfish to insist that the mother of the family was going and if the family didn't like it they could just come along. Fortunately, the children were thrilled to get out of school; and having lived for two years in Afghanistan, they were accustomed to making adjustments of various kinds.

I never confessed to the hotel, where I had reserved a single room, that I now had four others staying with me. We parked on a side street, and my fourteen-year-old son and I took empty suitcases down, filled them up with clothing, sleeping bags, and food, and tried to appear nonchalant as we came back up to what in my memory seems like the world's smallest room.

In the two-day workshop on sexism and language, there were sixty participants, including some men. Our goal was to develop guidelines or at least a statement about sexist language. Knowing that this was our goal, I had put our old portable typewriter in the station wagon. In the middle of the night, my hus-

band and children trying to sleep, I sat on the cold floor of the bathroom--it was made from those little black and white octagon tiles--typing out the first draft of what was to become "A Preliminary Version" of "Guidelines for Combatting Sexism in Language."

The Women's Committee brought a resolution to the Board of Directors asking for the preparation of guidelines for nonsexist language in NCTE publications. The resolution was approved, but this was just the first step toward getting a policy. At the 1975 meeting, the Board adopted a formal policy stating that "The National Council of Teachers of English should encourage the use of nonsexist language, particularly through its publications and periodicals." Everyone assumed this meant we would have guidelines, but the guidelines themselves were never voted on, which was politically smart because it's always easier to get large numbers of people to agree in principle to a worthy-sounding goal than to get them to agree to make specific changes in their own usage patterns. (For a fuller discussion, see "Guidelines Against Sexist Language," in *Women & Literature in Transition*, ed. by Joyce Penfield, State University of New York Press, 1987, pp. 37-52).

Over the next several years, working with the women's committee was my window to the world. It helped me develop a broader perspective; as one of my friends put it "to come out of the kitchen."

The preliminary version that we worked on at the New Orleans conference was worded as questions, for example:

--Do you expect or promote a different kind of written and oral expression from boys than from girls?

--Do you refer to teachers as *she* while principals, professors, and department heads are *he*?

Are doctors and lawyers automatically *he*, while nurses and secretaries are always *she*?

--Do you personify bad practices in English teaching as always female (i.e., *Miss Fidditch* or *Mrs. Grundy*)?

--Do you give the impression that female writers are somehow apart from the mainstream with the titles *poetess* and *authoress*?

--Do you mentally exclude women from the business world and teach your students to do the same by heading letters to unknown people with either *Gentlemen* or *Dear Sirs*?

Considering the guidelines that were later developed with considerable help from the professional editors at NCTE, along with the 1985 revised version, our preliminary draft looks very conservative. I'm surprised at how timid we were. We even suggested teaching students about the imperfect correlation in modern English between grammatical gender and the sex of the referent and about generic uses of the term *man*.

Over the next several years, working with the Women's Committee was my window to the world. It helped me develop a broader perspective; as one of my friends put it "to come out of the kitchen." Besides giving me a window to the world, the Women's Committee provided me with intellectual stimulation and excitement. I now chair the University Tenure and Promotion Committee at Arizona State University, and I see people searching for topics and forcing themselves to do research and writing not in hopes of changing the world, but simply to earn tenure and promotion. Those of us who were so enthusiastic in the early days of the Women's Committee may have been fooling ourselves about our power to change the world; nonetheless, these illusions kept our work from being drudgery. In my position as director of academic personnel at my university, I also hear people make the assertion that they do not get appropriate academic credit for feminist scholarship. This was not my experience, but it may be true for others in different times and different settings.

Throughout my twenty years of working closely with NCTE, I never felt that the top leadership had sexist attitudes, but I often observed that the general membership had sexist expectations. The English Education faculty at ASU has always been all male, while the students have been 90% female. I was often amused--and once in a while irritated--to observe the interrelationships among these professors and their students. I wanted to do a study comparing the psyches of professors with predominantly male students, e.g., those in engineering or math. However, there were more variables than I could cope with, but the idea is still on my list of things to do when I get smarter.

One of the ASU English Education professors is Ken Donelson, who graduated ten years before I did from the University of Iowa. We both had G. Robert Carlson as our Ph.D. advisor; so when my husband, Don, took a job in the English Department at ASU and we moved to Arizona from Iowa in 1973, I made friends with Ken because his office happened to be across the hall from Don's. It was easy to keep in contact. In 1980 we applied and were chosen to be co-editors of the *English Journal*. We exerted ourselves and probably tried the patience of NCTE staffers in being nonsexist (what I prefer to call sex-fair). For example, we alternated whose name was listed first and took turns writing the editorials. Nevertheless, in the beginning there were many people who assumed that Ken was the editor and that I worked for him. The best example of this came through my niece, who was a student in a community college on the east coast. One day her English teacher brought in a copy of *EJ* to use in class. My niece proudly shared the fact that her aunt edited the magazine, only to have the instructor argue that "No, Ken Donelson is the editor. Maybe your aunt is his assistant or something." As the years went by, such incidents occurred much less frequently.

Another change that I saw take place between the beginning and end of our term as editors (1980-87) was an increase in commitment and skill in relation to the use of sex-fair language. Today, the concept of an editor's right, and even obligation, to edit for sex fairness is pretty much accepted, but early on there was considerable controversy about it. A couple of years after NCTE had approved the policy on the use of non-sexist language, the late Harold Allen, former NCTE president from the University of Minnesota, sponsored a motion which said in effect that if an author wanted to use sexist language, that was his or her right. Before an editor could change it, the person had to give permission.

Three years in a row at NCTE conventions I met Harold Allen in some kind of a formalized discussion or debate on the matter. I had mixed feelings about arguing with this grand old statesman of NCTE because he was the one who recommended Don for his job at ASU--back in the days before open applications were the norm. His recommendation enabled me to disprove Thomas Wolfe and show that you can go home again. (I grew up in Arizona but hadn't lived there since 1959.) My mother was sure that God had brought me back to Arizona so that she could get to know her grandchildren, but I knew it was Harold Allen and I was duly respectful. Yet as *EJ* editors, there was no way that Ken and I could follow the procedure that Harold Allen recommended. We simply did not have the time or resources to communicate back and forth by letter with every author whose work we accepted. We edited with a heavy pencil (one woman wrote and thanked us for printing an "abstract" of her piece) and did not provide proofs to any of our authors. Fairly early in our editorship, I went through all the manuscripts for a couple of issues and checked our editing for changes related to sexist language. I found that in approximately half of the articles there was something that caused us to stop and consider matters related to sexist language, and in about one-third we made actual changes. (For a fuller discussion, see "Winning the Great He/She Battle," *College English*, February, 1984).

With the 7,000 manuscripts we handled, we had only one contributor's note to the effect that we shouldn't mess with her pronouns.

ASU excused each of us from teaching one class (the equivalent of ten hours of work per week) in exchange for editing the *Journal*, and we had only a half-time secretary. During all seven years of our editorship, we were frantically hanging on by our fingernails. Our solution to the Harold Allen amendment to NCTE's policy was to state in the masthead that we endorsed the use of NCTE's guidelines against sexist language and any contributor who disagreed with these guidelines should let us know at the time the article was submitted. With the 7,000 manuscripts we handled, we had only one contributor's note to the effect that we shouldn't mess with her pronouns.

I have been genuinely surprised at how much progress has been made in changing people's usage patterns, and it makes me feel good to know that the NCTE Women's Committee played a major role in promoting such changes. The majority of business letters are no longer addressed to *Gentlemen* or *Dear Sir*; words like *authoress* and *poetess* have dropped out of contemporary usage; when presiding officers are called *chair*, they no longer complain about being a piece of furniture; and most educated speakers have a tiny censor implanted in their brains that keeps them from referring to people in general with masculine pronouns.

I'm also glad that the current Women's Committee has decided to form the Women in Literature and Life Assembly and to publish a journal. It's the written material that lasts. In gathering my thoughts for this article, I was surprised at how much information about the early years has already been lost. This realization made me doubly grateful that early committee members had taken every opportunity to get our thoughts into print.

The other reason I'm glad the Assembly has been organized is that NCTE conducts much of its business at the annual convention, and people are forced to make severe choices. All of the committee meetings are held basically on the same day. And by no means is our work done. In fact, some of the challenges we face today are greater than those of the early 70's because the easy things have been said. Today's sexism isn't as obvious, but it's still there, and we don't have the advantage of bringing a new and media-grabbing message. Admittedly, the media attention was often a mixed blessing, but it brought the matter to people's attention. Today, many young women assume that sexism is a thing of the past; and when they come face-to-face with it, they are surprised and embittered. We need to keep this from happening; and because of the challenges that our schools are now facing, we need to make special efforts to recruit the best and the brightest of females and males into education.

Best wishes to this new assembly as it carries on the work for another fruitful twenty years. I hope I'll be around to contribute to its success, and I hope that in the year 2011 I'll be just as pleased and surprised at the progress that it makes as I was in looking back on these past twenty years with the Women's Committee.

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more than words are needed on days like these:

1. I get a call from a friend. Teachers at a local high school are furious that an assembly program gave as a "prize" to a married male instructor the public kiss of the prom queen, accompanied by whistles and shouts from the student body.

The English teachers are afraid to say anything about the incident, even though they find it unacceptable.

2. A first-year teacher, our graduate, calls about another high school assembly. In a skit about teachers by students, she was depicted having intercourse with several male students. The principal says, "Boys will be boys."

3. A graduate tells me how much she needs to know Women's Studies materials. She is encountering resistance to curriculum change because "women haven't written much," or much that matters.

4. On my own campus , students organize a teach-in about racism following the Rodney King verdict. The only white invited to speak draws from Peggy McIntosh's essay, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" (Working Paper No. 189, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women). Students request copies of the essay; but the local media omit all references to it or to the presence of a Women's Studies teacher on the panel.

What to do when a word after a word after a word isn't enough?

WILLA--named for Cather, who suppressed the records of her lesbian life but encoded her silences into powerful writing--can move us toward the multiple dialogue and effective strategizing we need to do as English teachers in a democracy. A rich new vernacular invites us into a more representative and yet deeply rooted social vision and social practice.

Remembering the Women

By Jeanne M. Gerlach

I will never forget the 1981 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) annual convention which was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was a doctoral student in English Education at West Virginia University, and my committee chair, David A. England, required me and his other advisees to attend the convention in order to fulfill a part of our doctoral program requirement. Even though I had taught school (secondary and college levels) since 1974, I had never attended an NCTE convention. At the time, I simply did not understand how much my professional organization could contribute to my teaching and scholarship. As a new convention attendee, I emersed myself in the program activities, attending numerous concurrent sessions, several workshops, the opening banquet, and nightly cocktail parties and gatherings. After the evening events, I stayed up most of the nights talking with my roommates about professional issues which had been discussed by the leaders in the field during the preceding day. I did not get much rest, but I seemed to gain energy from the excitement of meeting new people and learning about new and different ways of looking at teaching, learning, and knowing.

By Saturday afternoon I felt the need to go to my room for a quick nap or to leave the convention headquarters and take a walk in the fresh, brisk, November air. I chose the latter and headed toward an exit. As I moved through the corridors, a large poster attached to a ballroom door caught my eye--*Women's Tea*. I stopped dead. What was this? Images of a French Women's salon where women met to discuss their roles in society alternated with English afternoon teas where pastries and teas were offered to those who paused and rested a bit. My thoughts raced faster--What was NCTE's thinking about women? Had they remembered the women as Abigail Adams (1744-1818) had asked her husband John to do?

> Abigail Adams (1744-1818): In the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power in the hands of the husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.
>
> --Letter to John Adams, 31 March 1776.

Was NCTE paying heed to Abigail's advice to John--*Remember the Women?* I wanted to know the answers to my questions. I wanted to attend the tea, but could I? Was the tea open to all who wished to attend? I searched in my tote bag for my convention program, pulled it out, and quickly thumbed through the pages to find the listing of Saturday afternoon's sessions. There it was:

Women's Tea
4:30-6:00 p.m.
Hilton/Grant Room, Terrace Level
Open House Sponsored by Women's Committee of NCTE
Informal gathering for all interested in the concerns of women in NCTE and in the profession.

Although I had never thought much about issues as they related specifically to women in English education, I had been actively involved in women's groups, including The American Association of University Women and The National Organization for Women, that were concerned with gaining equitable treatment for all women. In addition, as an English major, I had taken several Women in Literature Courses and had written on sexist language in secondary school textbooks. I decided to attend the Women's Committee's Open House. This seemingly small decision changed the focus of my professional work.

At the Open House, I met several members of the Women's Committee, including the newly appointed chair, Driek Zirinsky. Driek pointed out that NCTE was indeed concerned with the fair and equitable treatment of both men and women. She gave me a copy of the NCTE charge to the Committee:

> to focus attention on the status and image of women in the Council and in the profession and to recommend ways of ensuring women equitable treatment by: advising the Executive Committee and the profession at large on issues relating to the role and image of women in the profession and the Council; acting as a resource for NCTE constituent groups in planning conferences and conventions, particularly on topics of concern to women in the profession; identifying and recommending women who should be more actively involved in Council affairs; analyzing and reporting on the role and image of women as expressed in journals and other publications of constituent groups of NCTE; and forming liaisons with women's committees in other professional organizations.

Then, as now, NCTE supported the belief that the role of education is to make opportunities available to women, not to limit them. For example, as committee member Alleen Pace Nilsen explained to me, NCTE had supported the publication of the Committee's *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language in NCTE Publications*, for it promotes language that opens up possibilities for women and men. In addition to the guidelines, Alleen gave me other free materials, among which were bibliographies and brochures by and about women. As important as these new materials about women's professional concerns were, my new excitement about the possibility of learning more about the role and function of the Women's Committee matched them.

As part of my doctoral research during the following year, I looked at the history of women in English education and at the history of the Women's Committee. I learned that scholars in the past had largely ignored English educators who were women and that that topic was worthy of a dissertation in its own right. I learned also that the Women's Committee has undergone several name changes. Formed in 1971 at the Annual Convention in Las Vegas, it was officially called The Committee on the Role and Image of Women in the Council and in the Profession. Then, in 1977, the committee members changed the name to The Committee on Women's Concerns. And once again, in 1978, the members shortened the name to the Women's Committee. (In 1972, Janet Emig was appointed the first chair; second was

Johanna De Stefano, in 1975. She was followed by Lallie Coy in 1978, and Driek Zirinsky succeeded her in 1981.)

Having developed a keen interest in the group, I attended "Remember the Ladies" Boston Tea Party and Idea Exchange (Sponsored by the NCTE Women's Committee) at the 1982 NCTE Annual Convention in Boston. I had suggested the "Remember the Ladies" part of the title, and the committee members decided to have an Idea Exchange where participants should bring 100 copies of teaching materials and ideas to share with other attendees. In addition, a special display of materials available from Women's Educational Equity Act Publishing Center was featured. Besides the Tea Party and Idea Exchange, convention goers could attend a session entitled *Mostly Films: Classroom Resources for Sex Equity*. Films included "Hey, What About Us?"--"I Is For Important"--"Killing Us Softly: The Image of Women in Advertising"--"The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter"--"The Math-Science Connection: Educating Young Women for Today (1-12)"--"It's Your Future."

Both of the Women's Committee sponsored sessions were timely and meaningful, but what I remember most about the Boston Convention was Driek Zirinsky's question, "Would you like to become a member of the committee?" Of course my answer was *Yes*. Driek told me to write a letter to Charles Suhor, Deputy Administrative Director of NCTE telling him why I was interested in the committee and why I wanted to become a member. As a result of my letter, I attended the 1983 Denver Annual Convention as an official Women's Committee member. That year, the committee's major focus was to revise the *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language*. The revised *Guidelines* would extend the existing document by offering alternatives to traditional language usages and the editorial choices that restrict meaning. Although the revision work was completed in 1983, the revised *Guidelines* were not published until 1985 because some of the council's executive members objected to nontraditional terms such as *gender-neutral, sex-fair, gender-free* which were used in place of the traditional term--*nonsexist*. Reportedly some of the Executive Council felt that the term *sex-fair* evoked images of Swedish sex orgies. In the end, the term *non-sexist* was retained. I feel compelled to point out that this was the first time I can remember when a conflict of ideas arose between members of the Women's Committee and the Executive Council.

In addition to their efforts to have the revised *Guidelines* published, members actively promoted other issues and concerns. According to the 1984 (Denver) and 1985 (Philadelphia) Convention Programs, issues concerning women's literature were paramount. Convention sessions included: "Teaching Women's Literature: Critical Approaches (S-C)," "The Place of Women Writers in the American Literary Canon (C)," and "Teaching Women's Literature: The Differences of a Decade (S-C)." Accompanying the new session topics in 1984 was a new chair, Lahna Diskin. During her leadership, the Committee grew from ten to twenty members.

The new members brought with them a diversity of interests and new priorities. These "new women on the move" held open meetings for anyone interested in the status of women. Discussing topics both personal and institutional, they interpreted women's sense of sisterhood and defined the norms of traditional roles as they searched for self-definition and autonomous values. These topics included: "Tuning into Your Rights: Disseminating Information Across Levels," "Clarifying Women's Life Experiences Through Writing," "Beyond Role-Modeling: Women Faculty As Mentors."

As a committee member, I participated in many of the discussions and led some of them; I worked with several committee members to compile a directory of other national women's organizations; I helped to develop workshops and sessions for NCTE conventions. I began to integrate women's studies into my own teaching (English and English education courses).

My three-year appointment to the Women's Committee would end at the close of the 1986 Annual Convention, as committee members were appointed to three year terms. However, I did not want to leave the Committee; I felt my work had just begun. Knowing this to be the case, Lahna Diskin nominated me to chair the Committee, and I was appointed in 1987.

Twenty members were present for the annual meeting in Los Angeles, 1987. Those present agreed that the major focus of the Committee during the next three years should be to explore in depth the impact women had on English education. They further concurred that the finding of such research should be shared with NCTE members at all conventions in both concurrent sessions and in workshops. In addition, members would contact NCTE journal editors and encourage them to publish more articles by and about women in the profession.

While the members agreed that it was extremely important to raise and discuss issues concerning women's roles in the profession during convention sessions and to encourage the journal editors to publish manuscripts addressing those same kinds of issues, they felt the need to do more, something more permanent. Since I, along with a new Committee member Virginia Monseau, had been exploring the history of women in English education for over a decade, we both knew that scholars in the past had largely ignored the place of women in the history of our field. Virginia and I agreed that we needed to write a book which would provide the "missing" information. Therefore, we decided to ask members of the committee to write chapters for the book; Virginia and I each agreed to write a chapter and to edit collaboratively the book. The membership voted unanimously to support such an effort, and eight members agreed to write chapters for *Missing Chapters: Ten Pioneering Women in NCTE and English Education*. The book, published in 1991, focuses on ten women who made significant contributions to the profession during NCTE's first fifty years and connects their work to what is being done in English education today. Even though we were eventually successful in getting NCTE to publish the work, there were those on the NCTE Executive Council who argued that we should not separate women from men in discussing professional contributions. However, Executive Council members finally agreed that an examination of women in the field of English education. *Missing Chapters*, then, serves as a permanent reminder of how the women of our past acclaim our future.

Missing Chapters took five years to complete (1987-1991), and while it was a major Committee project, members were addressing other issues of equal importance. During the annual conventions (St. Louis, 1988; Baltimore, 1989; Atlanta,

1990; and Seattle, 1991) the following projects were undertaken and completed.

1. Members agreed that there was a need for more information on teaching literature written by and about women. Margaret Carlson worked with a committee subgroup to collect, develop, and disseminate information of the same. Margaret worked with Jo Gillikin to write *Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English Grades (7-12)* which was published by NCTE in 1991.

2. The Committee saw a need to identify new ways to help eliminate sexism in the schools. Therefore, members encouraged all schools, colleges, and universities to develop guidelines for nonsexist communication, to invite speakers to address the issue, and to encourage teachers, professors, and staff members to become aware of their own communication patterns both inside and outside the classroom. Youngstown State University was one of the first universities to respond to our suggestion by publishing and disseminating *Guidelines for Nonsexist Communication.*

3. Committee members realized the need for monitoring and role modeling at all levels. In an effort to emphasize that need at the University level, we encouraged interested graduate students to become junior members of the Women's Committee.

4. The Women's Committee decided to give an annual award to an outstanding woman in English education. The Rewey Belle Inglis Award, named in honor of NCTE's first woman president, Rewey Belle Inglis, who served in 1928-1929, recognizes women for achievement in scholarship (research and writing), teaching, and/or service. Jane Christensen, Deputy Administrative Director of NCTE, was presented with the award in 1989, followed by English educators Alleen Pace Nilsen, 1990, and Ruth K.J. Cline, 1991.

5. The Committee requested and was granted a two-year extension to their original term. Such an extension was needed for the Committee to complete works in progress.

6. Members petitioned the Executive Committee to change our name from the "Women's Committee" to "The Committee on Women in the Profession." Members felt that "Women's Committee" seemed exclusive, rather than inclusive.

7. Since the Committee had grown to over thirty-five members by 1989, we divided into subgroups in an effort to more efficiently address issues dealing with publications, awards, networking, conference planning, monitoring, and sexist language.

8. The Committee continued to encourage NCTE journal editors to publish articles by and about women. Furthermore, we asked journal editors outside the Council to do the same. D. Barry Lumsden, editor of *Educational Gerontology*, an international journal, asked me to guest edit an issue of the journal. Along with several members of our committee, I worked to edit the special issue on Aging, Women, and Education, March 1991.

9. The Committee agreed to work with members of the CCCC's Women's Committee in a joint effort to publish a newsletter with articles and information about women.

10. The Committee sponsored workshops and concurrent sessions at NCTE conventions, including the NCTE Annual Convention, the Conference on College Compositionand Communication, and the Conference on English Education.

As anyone can see, the members of the Committee on Women in the Profession were involved in developing and completing numerous projects and activities during the 1987-1991 term. In addition, the membership had grown from twenty to over thirty-five active members. Because of the rapid membership growth and the commitment on the part of *that* membership to actively take on more new projects relating to the role and image of women in the profession, I suggested that we petition NCTE to grant our group assembly status. The members supported my proposal and eight women met at Nags Head, NC, in June, 1991, to write the ByLaws and Constitution for the Women in Literature and Life Assembly (WILLA). In September, 1991, formal document were filed with NCTE, and in October, 1991, the Committee on Women in the Profession was granted assembly status. The Women In Literature and Life Assembly met for the first time at the 1991 NCTE annual convention in Seattle; Sue Ellen Holbrook, the newly elected assembly chair, welcomed the membership and advised them that WILLA would continue to focus attention on the status and image of women in the Council and in the profession by working to make opportunities available to them, by seeing that all in the Council and the profession continue to *Remember the Women.*

JEANNE M. GERLACH is Assistant Professor of English Education and Curriculum and Instruction at the University of West Virginia.

The Aquisitive Maiden

He flattered her with painted words and phrases.
His talk of wedding bells remained evasive.
In time, he might have won her
Had it not been for a blunder
Which has foiled so many scoundrels thru the ages.

Come summer while he itemized his cravings,
He tactlessly inquired about her savings.
Her answer was to scorn him,
As there had been no forewarning
Of such interest which the lady thought outrageous.

She told him that his friendship had been tested.
"Found wanting" was the way that she expressed it.
And when the autumn leaves turned yellow,
She latched onto an honest fellow
Who taught her how to triple her investment.

By Maryjane O'Connor

A Literary Life
By Jane Maher

I liked the fact that Mrs. March from *Little Women* served tea every afternoon. But my mother, a school-crossing guard, was usually rushing in with the groceries at about 5 p. m..--tea time--still wearing her blue uniform with the white straps that wrapped over her shoulder, across her chest, then around her waist. I remember suggesting to her that *our* family have tea. We didn't have a parlor and we rarely used the living room, but the kitchen would do. My mother didn't even wonder where I got such an idea; she never suspected that it wasn't the tea I was after; it was the ritual, the ceremony, the "refinement" of it all, though at ten I didn't even know that such a word existed.

"Your father likes Coca Cola, " my mother said. "Who wants hot tea?"

I cannot remember where I even got a copy of *Little Women*. We subscribed to *Life* magazine, and every afternoon after I was old enough to cross the street, I would buy the newspaper *The Journal American* for my mother, but there were few if any books in our house.

My family thought I was a weird kid, always reading. My Uncle Joe had a theory. Although we were Italian-American and lived in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, my mother's obstetrician was affiliated with Maimonides Medical Center in Flatbush, so that's where I was born. My mother complained for years about the Kosher food she was served.

"The food ain't the only thing they stuck you with," my uncle told my mother one day. "They stuck you with the wrong kid. You got a Jewish kid. She don't like to eat and she's always reading. She can't be Italian." This joke expanded each time it was repeated. My other Italian aunts and uncles began to speculate about the whereabouts of my mother's *real* daughter.

"I can just see it now," my Uncle Victor declared. "There's this kid in Flatbush begging her Jewish parents for lasagna, saying she won't read one more word of the big fat encyclopedias they got lying all over the house until they give her second helpings of sausage and peppers."

I liked being different. I got along with my sisters and my cousins, but I secretly felt superior to them. I remember playing Monopoly with my cousin Michael one Christmas. He could barely read the Chance cards, and he was a year older than I was. By then, my family had nicknamed me Einstein, and everyone in our apartment building said that I was a girl with "a brain in her head." Gert, our next-door neighbor, praised my intelligence. She thought I was an intellectual like Dorothy Kilgallen, the one who guessed who the celebrity was on *What's My Line* even more often than Bennett Serf.

I must have read other things in grammar school, but I can only remember, in addition to some poems we were made to recite in unison, the monthly Maryknoll Missionary magazines and *The Lives of the Saints*. We all delighted over the gory accounts of missionaries having their fingernails pulled out for Christ or having their eyelids held open with toothpicks for refusing to renounce their faith. *The Lives of the Saints* was a thick old book with a faded maroon cover which my fourth-grade teacher always kept on her desk. She'd read from it whenever there was extra time between math and the 3 o'clock dismissal bell.

I will never forget the story of a pious man who should have been canonized but who would forever remain only blessed. He had led a devout life; he had always suffered and been kind, turning the other cheek and giving all he had to the poor, even risking starvation. He had, however, had the misfortune of being buried alive; medical procedures for determining death were unreliable in those days, Sister explained. When they dug up his body to see if it had not decomposed (a message from God himself to attest to one's saintliness), they discovered that the man had scratched the inside cover of his coffin to splinters. He had blood and hair under his fingernails and a very black look on his face. The saint makers had no choice but to wonder whether or not he had renounced God, so back into the ground he went; he would remain forever only beatified--no sainthood for him.

This story affected me so deeply that in addition to doing good deeds, I practiced being buried alive. *I* would be found with a smile on my face. Each night, for almost a year, I clenched my fists and stuck them between my legs and said Hail Mary's while I held my breath and wondered how long it would take to suffocate. My mother would find me in this position when she came to kiss me and my sisters good night. She often looked disgusted with me; and it wasn't until about five years ago, almost thirty years later, that I realized why she had looked that way--she must have thought I was masturbating.

No one in my life knew anything about literature. The closest anyone came was my Aunt Nancy, who frequently bragged that she had read *Gone With the Wind* from cover to cover.

When I read childhood accounts of writers like Eudora Welty, whose parents read to each other every evening, I almost laugh at the contrast. My parents went bowling or to the race track, except when my father, a fireman, was working the night shift. When I got to my British novel stage during the four years that I attended a Catholic high school, I became fascinated by the descriptions of libraries and of the characters who had access to them. I'm not talking about the Brooklyn Public Library here. I'm talking about those quiet, high-ceilinged rooms with shelves and shelves of leather-bound books where the characters didn't walk, they glided, and where they had servants to dust and polish.

This knowledge separated me from my family. When I was ten, I thought that we could have tea just like the Marches. But by the time I turned seventeen, I no longer wanted to have tea with my parents. I was ashamed of them, angry that they were who they were: not rich, not well-educated, not well-spoken or well-read. What an unpleasant kid I must have been! But I don't think my parents even noticed. They had bought a house and were struggling to fix it up and to pay the mortgage. They worked constantly, saving for furniture, for appliances; the cost of a new heating system almost ruined them. They saved Plaid Stamps from the A & P and redeemed them for tools. I helped my father rip down walls, mix cement, put up sheet rock. When we'd finish, he'd go off to one of his three jobs; I'd go back to my

novel.

My uncles and aunts said I was book smart. They said I had no respect for people who worked for a living. But they would ask me, with sincerity, what I learned from all those books. One of my aunts wanted a traffic light installed on her street; for years she'd say that she was going to get me to write a letter to the mayor about it because I would know the fancy words to use.

I got married soon after I graduated from high school to someone as unlike my family as I could find: an Irish college graduate who worked on Wall Street. And soon after that, I enrolled in the College of Staten Island, part-time, evenings. At first, I took all literature courses--I couldn't get enough of it: Modern British Lit and James Joyce the semester after my first daughter was born; A Survey of World Literature and British Poetry the semester my second daughter was born. I did all of George Eliot, most of Edith Wharton, and as much of Henry James and Virginia Woolf as I could understand on my own on the breaks between semesters. My professors loved me. In a classroom filled with students exhausted from working all day, I was often the only one who could distinguish between a metaphor and a simile; in fact, I was often the only one who stayed awake to try. God knows what wonderful things those grateful professors wrote in my letters of recommendation to Columbia University graduate school.

But graduate school was hard; I often didn't know what anyone was talking about, and it made me begin to regret the way I had felt and behaved with my family. I began to like them again, especially the women, especially at Sunday dinners. They never complained about housework; they had a way of folding up their sleeves and pitching in to get things done. They were comfortable and quick as they washed the huge sauce and macaroni pots. When they sponged the counters clean, the fat under their arms swayed to and fro, yet they were not encumbered by their weight. They worked briskly and efficiently; I started housecleaning jobs then left them unfinished for days, even weeks. My aunts had no need for rubber gloves or hand lotions, and they were the last generation of women on whom Weight Watchers had absolutely no effect. They expected to get fat; after each baby they had gained thirty pounds. They never lied that they were going on diets. They fried everything in deep olive oil, testing, tasting, and sampling shamelessly. They wore huge dresses that were still too tight, and they wore their stockings rolled just above their knees.

I began to realize that they had wisdom, gained, not from school and books, but from one another. They had their own community--a community of kitchens--in which they worked, sat, talked, advised, and most of all, laughed together. I started to write about them. I called it fiction, but I didn't fool the editor at *The Hudson Review*. "We love your family," she wrote, "and we'd like to publish your short story in our Spring issue."

"I hear they're putting your story in the Hudson River where it belongs," my father said, his way of showing that he was proud of me.

He died soon after, so he never knew that I became an English professor and that I continued to write. But I'm not sure what my writing would have meant to him even if he had lived. My mother certainly didn't know what to make of it. I stopped writing fiction, and soon after I became fascinated with the younger brothers of Henry and William James. I spent years researching their lives, particularly their valiant Civil War service, so that I could write a biography. My mother had never even heard of Henry or William James, much less their younger siblings, but she had heard of Patrick Henry, so at some point she made the transposition in her mind. I corrected her a few times, but then stopped when my old frustration returned. My family was ignorant; they didn't--couldn't--understand what I was doing, what was important to me. I didn't realize that my mother was telling all her friends in the retirement community where she had moved that her daughter was writing a book about Patrick Henry.

My mother was terribly confused and flustered at the book-signing party. She came up to me during a quiet moment and asked if maybe I had written *two* books.

"Who are these guys?" she asked incredulously, looking at the never-before-published photographs I had found of the younger James brothers. Even Leon Edel had been impressed with these pictures, discovered in an attic in Bryn Mawr, but they meant nothing to my mother.

"What about Patrick Henry?"

I began to realize what was going on in her mind. How could she face her friends with *this* book when she had promised Patrick Henry? The irony of it all hit me then. I had spent an enormous part of my life being ashamed of my parents, being embarrassed by them, feeling intellectually superior to them. Now, it was my mother's turn to be mortified. Her daughter had written a book about the wrong person.

But a book with your daughter's name on the cover isn't such a bad thing, so my mother keeps her copy on the coffee table in her living room for everyone to see. I think she even tried to read it; once when I visited, I noticed that page 6 was folded down in the corner.

And now that my father is dead, my mother does read a lot more. She often reads the things that I send her, short stories mostly. Two years ago, when she had a cataract removed, I spent four days with her: caring for her, cooking for her, reading stories to her, stories that I had chosen carefully, eliminating the ones I knew would confuse and annoy her, the ones that she described as having "no real endings." When I finished reading Tillie Olsen's "Tell Me a Riddle," to her she said, "Now that's a story, Janie. That's a real life story. I can understand that story. It doesn't make me feel stupid. It makes me feel more human."

I walked into the kitchen quickly so that she wouldn't know I was crying. I took a long time to make some tea for us. Then went back into the living room and brought the tea to the couch where my mom was resting, and I served it to her. It was very peaceful and dignified and comfortable. In fact, if you didn't know us, you would have thought we were just like the characters in *Little Women*.

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Talk Among Chicks
By Marcia Worth

Recently, I heard one of my students in Bard College's Basic Writing class telling the others that his girlfriend was a "total bitch" because she got angry when he called her a "chick." "She knew I didn't mean it in a bad way," he said. The rest of the class nodded in sympathy and agreement, not with her anger, but with his assessment of her character. "What's wrong with being called chick?" one female student asked. Plenty, I thought, and felt very old. There is no good way to be called a chick.

I asked the female students in the class what terms they use to describe themselves and what they want to be called by others. The male students consider themselves men. The female students answer, "Girls, but it's all right to be called a chick, and bitch is okay too if said in affection. You know, when a guy is kissing you or something." When I asked them if they ever called themselves women, they sat in polite silence, not wanting to disappoint me by saying no. My students--smart, ambitious, very liberal--are frankly uncomfortable with being called women.

I was surprised by my students. I am older than they are--by all of six years. All of us are new to Bard College: they are fresh from high school; I am just out of graduate school. We grew up with the same popular culture; we often use the same slang. All of us are eager to fit in at Bard, which means conforming to the college culture of respect for each individual, treating others as adults, and on paper at least, referring to one another as men and women.

But when my students call themselves chicks and girls, they seem to be saying, "Don't bother to respect me as an adult; I'm just a kid here." The term bitch is another story altogether; it almost seems to say, "Don't respect me as a person." I know that it's not easy to be so young and to call oneself a woman; the culture of my college, a woman's college, was to do just that. I became very adamant about my terms: woman, non-negotiable. My parents were surprised by my earnestness; they found it cute. But they adjusted to the term *woman* and treated me as more of an adult.

Why do my students choose to settle for less? The irony is clear: to treat these female students as children, as girls, to give them a curfew or curtail visits from male students to their rooms, for example, would invite revolt on the campus. To pay them less for their campus jobs than their male classmates are paid would be heresy to them. Their indignation at these very ideas when I presented them in class was probably equal to that of the woman who refused to be called chick. My students accept the benefits of women, of adults, but they won't accept the term.

When my class told me that even I, the teacher, could call myself a girl, a chick, I felt that table around which we all sat lengthen and divide into two. I found myself standing on one side of a chasm, the side of adulthood, next to the "total bitch" who wouldn't be called "chick," waving to my students on the other side. They are young women eager to claim adulthood, womanhood, in act but not in name, not realizing that to call yourself girl is to be treated as a child. Claim your womanhood, my students, and leave the girls behind.

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The Princess and the Pea

Soft decisions pile up
like feather beds
each easy choice
resting lightly
on top, on top
Until finally the woman
climbs up for sleep
and feels at the bottom
some pea that
makes sleep
Impossible and unwelcome

She is no one's princess
these mattresses
this pea self made
her own test
she has been set upon
other beds
tested by other
imposed standards
spread herself
touched four corners
till wrists and ankles
ached
Passing, she had a prize
unintended
unacknowledged
that has become
a small hard pea
that bothers only her own
sleep

By Nadine Charity

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Interview with Janie Hydrick

By Sandy DeCosta

Janie Hydrick, President-elect of NCTE, received degrees at Vassar and the University of Arizona in Tucson and is an elementary classroom teacher in Mesa, Arizona. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Arizona State University in Tempe. Janie's life has been most strongly influenced by two teachers. Ms. Ellie Lee, her aunt, came to the United States from Cuba in the early 1900's. She taught parolees and prisoners in the Arizona state prisons. Later, she became a high school foreign languages teacher and was named US National Teacher of the Year for her outstanding contributions to education. Janie's other mentor is Dr. Yetta Goodman, a prolific contributor to Language Arts research. Janie's professional interests have led her to the National and International Writing Projects and to her various leadership roles in NCTE. Janie states that her close involvement with NCTE and the National Education Association has provided opportunities to help advance human rights in terms of language arts empowerment. Janie is the first elementary classroom teacher to be elected President of NCTE. She looks forward to the many challenges of the coming year.

Q. *WILLA* signals something new for NCTE - both in targeting gender issues and in its overt efforts to reach out to elementary educators. How do you feel about this?

A. Differential treatment of boys and girls in the public schools has been an issue for a long time, and there is renewed interest. The recent AAUW Report "How Schools Shortchange Girls" brought gender to the forefront. We know that there are many ways in which both male and female teachers in the classroom respond differently to boys and girls. What that means or can eventually yield is just one aspect of a need for greater teacher awareness. Through the curriculum and the materials we use in our teaching, gender needs to be an "up-front" issue rather than one that elicits a "knee jerk" reaction. Women and girls are different and need to be acknowledged accordingly, but they must not be silenced or demeaned because of gender and because of subconscious responses to them. All teachers need to be aware of ways to ensure equity in education and encouragement for all students beginning in the earliest grades.

Q. Whom do you see as *WILLA's* audience?

A. Could be anyone interested in realistic and humanistic education--people sensitive to women's issues, human issues, and human rights, in general. Those interested in the topic of women would be an audience for *WILLA*.

Q. What are some general elementary school needs *WILLA* might meet?

A. I went to an all-women's college, Vassar. It provided many different and wonderful opportunities for me as a young woman. Competition immediately comes to mind because my own education was a training ground for it. But it's growing harder and harder to find all-women's schools. I suspect most are private, and this kind of education isn't realistic or possible today. Every teacher can and should be aware of differences between men and women, boys and girls and use appropriate pedagogy. *WILLA* can create an awareness of and provide a vehicle for continuing learning.

Q. Will *WILLA* be of interest to elementary teachers?

A. It will be if it is presented as important to K-6 teachers. There is currently a bombardment of information of all sorts being directed at teachers. That means teachers must decide to direct their efforts and energies toward the most pressing, most convincing needs. If *WILLA* presents gender issues and ways for the classroom teacher to respond to the issues, I think it will be well received. I understand that *WILLA* intends to solicit contributions from classroom teachers. That will constitute more than any other group has done to acknowledge elementary teachers. *WILLA* can be a most influential journal, for it can encompass teacher to parent, teacher to teacher, teacher to administrator, teacher to, and as, researcher. If *WILLA* identifies problems of gender, provides some answers, as well as opportunities to contribute answers, then teachers will be convinced of *WILLA's* value. Teachers who accept challenges and seek answers are the people who will last in education, and they will read *WILLA*. There is very fertile ground out there for all that *WILLA* stands for!

Q. Are elementary teachers concerned about gender issues as they relate to the classroom and young children? How is concern expressed?

A. I think teachers become more aware of gender issues at certain times of the academic year. For example, when engaged in traditional administrative tasks or averaging the final grades, it is easy to reflect on the year. One thinks of those who are "straight A" students, those who are vocal, those who are leaders. These kinds of reflections result in gender consciousness. Yetta Goodman says we need to engage in lots of "kid watching" and be aware of times we call on kids and how groups are formed and who the kids seek out for help on various tasks. All these combine to create awareness of gender issues.

A classroom example of this occurred when the violence in South Africa and the Thomas-Hill hearings were being covered simultaneously on television. My students seemed to have a sense of justice and fair play. They said all "the right" things. But just a few days later there was a state final basketball tournament in town, and the two opposing teams were very different. One team was black and Hispanic while the other was predominantly white. Comments the kids made were shocking. Their statements reflected an entirely different set of attitudes and beliefs from what was represented in the earlier class discussions of Thomas-Hill and South Africa. It was so clear that discussion of national events occurs on one level, and involvement in local issues becomes something else. Sexual harassment, race, ways the children treat and think about one another are often so different. Kids and teachers need to be aware of where they are in their own development. Kids especially need help in being aware. These can be sticky issues to deal with, but when "the beast" has to be dealt with.... *WILLA* has a place here in presenting scenarios, vignettes, short entries, which will likely increase the reader's sense of personal identification. These will be the usable classroom activities.

Q. Does it seem that elementary texts are written to reflect conscious concern about gender-balance?

A. I think it's a bit better. In the last ten years especially with

illustrations. graphics, and text, I have noticed more effort to consider balance. However, there is still much to be done. Too many girls are relegated to traditional female professions and prepared through traditional coursework while the boys are encouraged into the more technological fields. If there were genuine balance in the textbooks, this wouldn't continue. The subject area that represents the greatest gains in gender equity is literature for children.

Q. Are texts and teaching materials now more likely to provide role models for girls and adolescent females?
A. They look better because the illustrations and photographs are more inclusive of girls and women. But the content does not reflect the same effort at equity. Myra and David Sadker (1991) reported that content analysis research assessing portrayals of males and females in instructional material decreased precipitously during the 1980's. They reported that there simply isn't a systematic body of current research to provide a clear picture of the current state of gender equity in school texts and children's literature. If gains have been made, we don't really know where or what kinds. If this research isn't undertaken, any gains made could likely be lost. I've noticed something else in the national role models for reading. Posters which encourage reading most recently seem to feature *only male athletes*. We also need to see posters of girls and women in various roles who are modeling and encouraging reading.

Q. Are women highlighted in the various content areas (literature, science, physical education, math, politics, music, art) seen as important and valued contributors?
A. In literature there seems to be more diversity represented than in past years. However, in the other areas, no.

Q. How can classroom teachers be reached by *WILLA* for their ideas and contributions?
A. On the personal level. The one-to-one appeal for good ideas is best. I think there has to be a direct request for contributions to *WILLA*. We know teachers have wonderful ideas. The National Writing Project is a good example of how creative and effective teachers can be. Perhaps an appeal through the NWP could reach a number of interested teachers. If a few are enlisted, the word will spread through the profession.

Q. What types of materials (age, appropriate stories, picture sets, biographies, slides, units of study highlighting various individuals, etc.) do you feel teachers need to strengthen teaching for gender balance?
A. All of the above are needed. They could be made available to teachers, but if awareness isn't there, it won't make any difference. How teaching occurs, how information is presented and used are all critical. More than the acquisition of appropriate materials, there is a need to train teachers to become aware of inequities.

Q. Do you think development of a Gender-Based Model Curriculum in Language Arts, K-6 would be a worthwhile undertaking for *WILLA?*
A. Something I would find most useful is an index of references or an anthology of teaching materials, children's literature (traditional and contemporary), and teacher/student resources. It should be in a form that could be easily updated. This would be a valuable undertaking.

Q. Do you think women's history month might get more positive attention if *WILLA* prepared guidelines, units of study?
A. Yes. These materials could be helpful. Black History Month materials are readily available and are very good. Materials like these help teachers learn while teaching--they feel more secure and comfortable about their teaching.

Q. Do you see *WILLA* serving as a vehicle to prepare women to lobby for women's issues?
A. There are some powerful organizations established to do just this. *WILLA* could provide specific information on language and literature. That would be our most powerful role. Provide ammunition through information and resources.

Q. Do you think *WILLA* might serve as a vehicle to encourage women into administrative positions within the public schools?
A. I suppose it could, but education needs exemplary people in the classroom. If outstanding teachers are encouraged to remain in the classroom, that's where the power is.

Q. Do you see *WILLA* serving as an organizer and a support group for issues relevant to all women in education?
A. Yes. I would want it to.

Q. What kinds of articles would you like to see in *WILLA?*
A. Vignettes of classroom situations and solutions would be especially helpful. We teachers need to be able to read more about other women, and we want to hear about women who are problem solvers. I would like to see some "up close and personal" articles about women.

Q. Are there other undertakings you envision for *WILLA*?
A. I would like to see *WILLA* serve as a clearinghouse or network for women's issues, resources, and advocates. It might be a place where ideas are sent and organized into documents to help teachers and researchers in their efforts to increase equity.

Q. Any closing comments?
A. Historically the weak have been repeatedly victimized. There has been a horrifying increase in violence against women. Women may inadvertently contribute to that scenario because they have not been sufficiently aware of or well enough informed about women's issues. Materials which might have proved helpful have not been readily available. If *WILLA* can help teachers become better informed so that gender-balanced teaching transfers to the next generation, something of value will have been achieved.

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Rose Macaulay's *And No Man's Wit* and Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls:* Two Spanish Civil War Novels and Questions of Canonicity

By D. A. Boxwell

Fiction enthusiasts in October 1940 could read two new novels about the Spanish Civil War from first-rank publishing houses. Both well-known and established writers drew their titles from the writings of John Donne to make sympathetic statements about the crushing defeat of Republican Spain. American literary consumers could base their purchasing and borrowing decisions on equally favorable 1100-word reviews of the novels in *The New York Times Book Review*. *And No Man's Wit* "contains some of Rose Macaulay's most brilliant writing, most incisive and compassionate irony [and] contains too a sadness that is almost despair. Yet even in war's wider devastation, we can read her book now for its wit and wisdom," Katherine Woods asserted. The preceding week, the *Times* lent its authority to a praiseworthy assessment of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as "the best book Ernest Hemingway has written, the fullest, the deepest, the truest" (Adams).

Yet within three years, Hemingway's novel, published by Scribners, had sold 885,000 copies (Lynn 484) and had been made into a "three-hour Technicolor blockbuster" by Paramount (Higham and Greenberg 117), which paid Hemingway $136,000 for the movie rights (Lynn). *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has subsequently never been out of print, while countless college and university teachers have placed it on countless syllabi and perpetuated the novel as an "approved" major American novel for successive generations of students. By stark contrast, however, Macaulay's novel, published by Little-Brown after its initial appearance in Britain in June 1940, quickly faded from public attention. *And No Man's Wit* was never filmed, has never been reprinted on either side of the Atlantic, and has not been studied or promoted in the sacred groves of Academe. Unlike Hemingway's "timeless classic," Macaulay's novel, which I wish to propose as no less important a statement about the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, has virtually vanished from the literary consciousness of the 20th century. What at first retrospective glance is an apparently level literary "playing field" for these two competing texts in 1940 is soon revealed as a treacherous, and highly gendered, zone of contention.

By tracing the shifting fortunes of the reputations of both authors and their contemporaneous statements about the Spanish Civil War, I would like to explore--at least partially--the reasons for the effacement of Macaulay's achievement from the literary landscape and the process of canonization which has insistently chosen, instead, to value and remember Hemingway's achievement. The point of departure for my analysis is a concept articulated recently in *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English*, namely, that of "strategic amnesia," which has consistently legitimized and privileged patriarchal foundations of knowledge and experience (363). My purpose here is to demonstrate how and why the overwhelmingly patriarchal institutions of publishing and academia, which are largely responsible for maintaining the "consensus" about what is--and is not--canonical literature, have not simply "neglected" Macaulay, but have strategically chosen to forget or ignore the uncomfortably anti-militarist and anti-chauvinist aspects of her novel by instead privileging the more comforting and sustaining masculinist mythos embodied in Hemingway's text. I wish, then, to disinter an oppositional text to Hemingway's which, as Joanna Russ has said of women's writing in general, has suffered "premature burial" (124). This short essay intends, by concentrating on the shifting fortunes of two novels about the Spanish Civil War, to point up the "processes by which we canonize, valorize, and select the texts to be remembered" (Kolodny 291).

Dale Spender, assessing the historical suppression of women writers from the canon, in *Women of Ideas*, answers her rhetorical question "Why didn't we know about these women?" (4) by arguing that "a patriarchal society depends in large measure on the experience and values of males being perceived as the *only* valid frame of reference for society" (4). Macaulay herself recognized the problem of the invisibility of women's achievements, meanings, and values. In 1921, she stated it was "a fact that literature and thought have, anyhow till lately, been in the main in the hands of men, and men have found themselves unable to accept women as an ordinary, and not at all out of the way, section of humanity" (Spender 160). She spoke too soon. As we are now consciously realizing, women writers of Macaulay's generation have been excluded from the Modernist canon because they were deemed insufficiently experimental, apolitical, impersonal, universal, or allusive (Scott 5). This reiterates a point Bonnie Kime Scott makes (7) about the seven pages devoted to 20th century women's contributions to Modernism in Ellmann's and Fiedelson's well-known 1965 anthology, *The Modern Tradition*, a work 948 pages in length. In that compendium of Modernist thought and achievement--itself a "classic" anthology--only two women, Virginia Woolf and Harriet Monroe, make an appearance (and Monroe only by virtue of an epistolary colloquy with the real occasion for her presence, Hart Crane).

We need only examine further many of the contemporary reviews which greeted *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to gain a sense of how literary tastemakers in 1940 expressed the idea that an important work of fiction should emphasize the serious weight of "universal" experience in war, which transcends political agenda, as well as class and gender concerns. *Times'* reviewer intoned, "the bell in this book tolls for all mankind," while *The Nation* asserted that Hemingway set a new standard for himself in "compassion for the human being faced with death." Yet viewed through the defamiliarizing lens of Macaulay's novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a resolutely androcentric and classist work, its controlling narrative consciousness almost entirely that of the male hero's, Robert Jordan. Jordan is socially privileged by his virtually unquestioned assumption of *de facto* leadership of Pilar and Pablo's band of guerrillas. Male university professors can easily identify with Hemingway's action-oriented and politically committed--yet romantically idealized--professor of Spanish. It is largely Robert Jordan's responses to the events and conditions of the War which govern the liberal humanist political "message" of Hemingway's novel. Macaulay's novel, by contrast, is more

unsettling in that there is no identificatory unity provided by a single character's sustained point of view. Instead, the controlling consciousness is that of the satiric, skeptical, faintly mocking omniscient third-person narrator, very purposefully Macaulay's own urbane and "donnish" (to use Woolf's description) voice. This voice comments critically and ironically on her characters and their responses to the trauma of civil war and its aftermath. In consequence, contemporary reviewers stressed the novel's "light tone" (*Yale Review*), its "sparkling pessimism" (Anthony West in *The New Statesman*), and its "delicate playfulness" (*Times Literary Supplement*), implying that Macaulay's problematic mixture of Menippean satire, travel writing, and fantasy was merely an "amusing but quite unimportant narrative" (*Books*) about the Spanish Civil War.

This privileging of certain fictional modes over others in war literature finds consecrated expression in a work published in 1942, entitled *Twentieth Century Authors*, a work which could, and still can, be found in many a campus library reference section. The editors assert, in their Preface, that they "have been guided less by their personal critical preferences" in choosing their selection, "than by an effort to satisfy the general taste" (v). This is disingenuous, surely. Such reference works are as equally crucial in shaping tastes in literature as they are in reflecting critical consensus. A comparison of the entries for Hemingway and Macaulay raises some crucial questions about the politics of canon formation, especially its sexual politics. The 160-line Hemingway entry insistently remarks on the author's masculinist heroics, comparing him overtly to Byron (635). However much Kunitz and Haycraft call the heroism into question by calling it "overstressed" (635), the fact remains that Hemingway's mythification as potent "Papa" had, as early as 1942, shaped the critical consensus and its overwhelmingly positive response to his works. *Twentieth Century Authors* simply asserts that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* approaches "true greatness" (636) and concludes by admitting Hemingway into the Pantheon in the passive voice of patriarchal *ex cathedra* authority: "It can be understood that Ernest Hemingway is among the few genuinely important fiction writers of his generation" (636). Macaulay's entry, on the other hand, is much more dismissive of her reputation and personal life, covering a career in only 80 lines which began in 1906, when Hemingway was barely out of short pants and little dresses. In fact, the entry is incorrect: it was her *fourth* novel--not her first, as the editors state--which was published in 1911, and she was aged 30 and long out of Somerville College, Oxford when that happened. She had published eleven novels by 1921, the point at which Hemingway had written "nothing except for his newspaper stories" (635). Her twenty-first novel, *And No Man's Wit*, embodies, so it is implied by the author of this notably untrustworthy biographical sketch, her "cold," "passionless," "clever," "sexless," "superficial" wit. The profile effectively tolls the death knell on her career sixteen years before its end, by declaring, "In the end she has become the victim of her own reputation," while Hemingway's reputation is only enhanced, of course, by his "heroic" public persona. Moreover, *Twentieth Century Authors* neglects to mention Macaulay's extensive travel in Spain, while reminding us of Hemingway's pseudo-combat experience in the Spanish Civil War with his involvement in the making of the documentary *The Spanish Earth*: thus, it is inferred, he has a greater claim to authority as a recorder of that subject. As for Macaulay's own tastes as a reader, *Twentieth Century Authors* specifies that Macaulay dislikes "serious" authors and that her favorite writers are Anatole France and Virginia Woolf. Again, the dread phrase, "light touch" is raised with regard to Macaulay's (and, by extension, to Woolf's) writing (866). Even more egregiously, the entry on Macaulay speaks of her as a "maiden aunt" and "feminine dandy" (865), whose wit is "superficial" and "heartless" (866).

These (mis)judgments about Macaulay's life and work, it is possible to argue, profoundly distort her accomplishments. In short, this readily available reference work exemplifies, as well as perpetuates, to a great degree, patriarchal resistance to women's literary production. A reading of Macaulay's novel reveals modes of thought and expressions about the Spanish Civil War which would have virtually guaranteed its subsequent obscurity in the dismissive critical environment I have just described. In contrast to Hemingway's novel, which has sustained a large part of its readership over the first half century with its insistent endorsement of a rigorous "code of conduct" which has the power to bestow nobility on the rugged male individual in combat, *And No Man's Wit* expresses deep pessimism about the possibility of heroism in war. Macaulay's rejection of masculinist myths of courage in this novel attests to her lifelong dedication to pacifism and the barbed (and, yes, often witty) articulation of antimilitarism in much of her writing. The title alone of Macaulay's novel signifies a degree of skepticism about "uplifting" messages about human fulfillment in war. Robert Jordan, in Hemingway's novel, attains apotheosis as a "bridge blower," his mission accomplished and his quest for sexual and heroic fulfillment achieved by the text's closure. Dr. Kate Marlowe, the chief protagonist of *And No Man's Wit*, is a committed and often undiplomatically outspoken socialist, feminist, and anti-imperialist who ultimately fails in her *maternal* quest, namely, the search for her missing son, Guy, a member of the International Brigades who has been swallowed up in the maw of Franco's torture-and-imprisonment machinery. At one point in the novel, Dr. Marlowe ponders the complete futility of the Spanish Civil War for all its participants:

> Oh, what was the use? Each day, as Spain's strange, illiberal impenetrability daunted her a little more, she sank into a drearier skepticism, not only as to finding Guy, but as to the very foundations of her faith and his, the roots from which she was and would be lost in a waste of strangeness, of doubt, of disillusion and defeat. Spain was a cenotaph of lostcauses and slain hopes ... There was no finality of achievement, no settled success; once established, all regimes rocked and toppled to destruction. Guy and his kind, in fact, had fought to no purpose. (189)

Far from being frivolous entertainment, as the critical consensus suggested, *And No Man's Wit* goes well beyond Hemingway's work in its sustained and overt critique of Fascism; the systematic destruction of art and literature (it is Macaulay who ponders Lorca's fate, for example); and the Vatican's complicity in the rise of Mussolini, Franco, and Hitler. Furthermore, it is Macaulay in 1940 who shows a greater awareness of the

reality of "the new Germany--Gestapo, *gleichgeschaltet* Press, concentration camps, and all," including the "disposal" of the Jews (71). Determinedly anti-romantic to the last, Macaulay does not entertain the possibility of transcendent love in the midst of war: hence there is no fulfilled "love interest" in her novel, the sort of plot element which pleased and shocked Hemingway's contemporary critics. (Adams in the *New York Times* wrote, "I know of no love scenes in American fiction and few in any other to compare with those of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in depth and sincerity of feeling.") Macaulay, perhaps most subversively of all, problematizes the masculinist emphasis on homosocial relationships in the turbulence of war. Of two of her male characters, friends as Oxford undergraduates in the early 1930's who later find themselves on opposing sides and renew their acquaintance in Spain on more troubled terms, she writes: "The illusion of undergraduate friendship passed; the bitterness and disagreeableness of three years of bloody war surged between them" (247). The friendship between Guy and Ramon is only tenuously restored at the very close of the novel.

For these reasons, I suggest, it is not difficult to see why *And No Man's Wit* would have been relegated quickly to the margins of the literary landscape by the critics, publishers, anthologists, and curriculum committees who could have allowed Macaulay's novel to attain "power in the world," as Jane Tompkins expresses it (qtd. in Kolodny 304). However, it was more in their interests to canonize *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Its triumphalism on this score rested securely on certain hallmarks which have been valorized by the patriarchy. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that by May 1949, Hemingway's novel had received affirmation as an "instant classic" by at least one institution of higher learning.

A decade before the U. S. Air Force Academy was actually constructed, the all-male Planning Board's Curriculum Development Committee recommended that the proposed sophomore "World Literature" course begin with a "modern work of proven value and current interest ... consistent with the principle of keeping the course relevant to the lives, interests, and needs of the Air Cadets" (13). The novel chosen to fit these criteria was, of course, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, a work which was considered ideal "To introduce the Air Cadets, through the study of an enjoyable modern novel which deals with aspects of the most tragic problems of their own time, to the vitality, significance, and interpretive power of a good novel" (13). At face value, these standards by which we have judged certain works of literature worthy of perpetuation have seemed unproblematic and not open to question. Yet recent feminist and cultural materialist thought has pointed up the gendered and politicized dynamics of canon formation and given us a deeper awareness of the degree to which any literary landscape is violently contested terrain. Influenced by Poststructuralist epistemologies, we are now more willing to admit that the processes by which we universalize and canonize literary production and, conversely, the processes by which we condemn other works to undeserved oblivion must be *consciously* understood and critiqued.

As Dale Spender has asserted, "If we do not understand the process by which hundreds of women--often influential in their own time--have been made to disappear, how can we believe that what has happened" to them will not also happen to creative women artists who are very visibly alive today? (14). In her lifetime, Dame Rose Macaulay was hardly a negligible presence on the Anglo-American literary scene. Indeed, Virginia Woolf's frequent diary comments on her chief rival attest to Macaulay's visibility as a prize-winning novelist, social and literary critic, and columnist in such well-known journals as *The Spectator, Horizon*, and *Time and Tide*. Nonetheless, she stands as one of countless object lessons in how literary canonization is a process by which women authors have been subject to misrepresentation, non-recognition, and other disadvantageous forms of cultural control.

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The Transformational Rhetoric of Photography in Sue Miller's *Family Pictures*

By Brenda O. Daly

In *Family Pictures* Sue Miller writes from a double-visioned narrative position: her narrator, Nina Eberhard, is at once an expectant mother looking forward to her new family and a daughter looking back upon the lives of her parents and five siblings, one of whom was born autistic. Because Nina's family is large and complex and because she wishes to tell the stories of all members of her family, not just the story of her own adolescence, she must revise the child-centered narrative strategies of the conventional Freudian family romance. Instead, Nina employs a multi-voiced narrative strategy that opens a space from which the mother, who has long been silenced in both fictional and psychoanalytic narratives, may finally speak and claim her own subjectivity. This is a radical innovation when one considers the fact that, historically, both psychoanalytic and fictional narratives have silenced the mother, predicating the child-narrator's claim to agency and subjectivity upon an objectification of the mother. Such a denial of maternal subjectivity is more problematic for a daughter who, unlike a son, must decide whether or not to become a mother herself, a choice that has become available to most women only recently. Prior to the discovery of effective birth control and prior to the second wave of the women's movement, the fate of most women has been that of their mothers before them: bear and care for children, often at the expense of their own subjectivity and at the price of their confinement in the devalued domestic sphere.

In this historical context, *Family Pictures* may be considered a feminist revision of the Freudian family romance, that narrative of identity in which the speaking subject is situated, as Julia Kristeva says, "in the interior of the oedipal triangle" (quoted in Hirsch, 10).[1] As Marianne Hirsch explains in *The Mother/Daughter Plot*, this pattern does not suit female narrators; therefore,

> female and feminist family romances necessarily situate themselves in a revisionary relationship to the Freudian pattern, with the fictional heroine often having to occupy the position of subject and that of object in the narrative. Revisions reframe the basic paradigm to include stories of daughters and eventually also stories of mothers (10).

In her analysis of mother/daughter stories, Hirsch sees some change from the nineteenth century to the present: in the nineteenth century the heroine desires a singularity based on a disidentification from the fate of other women, especially mothers; in the modernist period the heroine adds "artistic ambition" to "the desire for distinction which now, however, needs to include affiliation with both male and female models"; and in the postmodernist period female narratives illustrate "fantasies of a more multiple relational identity, including stories of mothers who by definition are entangled in relations which define and circumscribe all further desire" (10). Rarely, according to Hirsch, do mothers appear in the stories of daughters. When they do appear, they function "as alternate objects of desire," until "eventually, mothers begin to appear as subjects" (11).

In *Family Pictures* Nina Eberhard moves, in a single lifetime, through the nearly two centuries of historical changes that Hirsch identifies: from an adolescent's desire for singularity and a need to disidentify with her mother and sisters, to a young adult's focus on artistic ambition, and finally, after a period of reflection on her former self, to a mature desire for affiliation with other women, including her mother and sisters. The novel ends just as Nina is about to begin her own family, when she is capable of looking back and critiquing the "daughter-centricity" of her former identity (Daly and Reddy, 2). Having reached this insight, Nina recognizes her own narrative, not as singular, but as one among others; at the same time, she also recognizes her mother as a separate subject, not simply as an object left behind in her own quest for identity. Since Nina is a professional photographer, she uses the rhetoric of photography to identify the intersubjective space in which her transformation from a mother-rejecting to a mother-accepting daughter occurs. Each time references to photographs or Freud surface in the novel, and usually they occur together, they indicate an important moment in Nina's maturation, as do the rooms in which dramas take place. "Someone's in the Kitchen with Freud," Jane Smiley says in her review of the novel, and that someone is Nina's mother, Lainey. However, if Nina is to recover her mother's story and her own, she must revise the traditional Oedipal, or child-centered, narrative, inventing a strategy that does not silence the maternal voice. To accomplish this goal, Miller does not simply suppress the more familiar father/son plot, replacing it with a mother/daughter plot; her solution is more complex, requiring shifts in familial perspective that illustrate how Nina is both subject and object and how her story intersects with others in her large family, including her mother's.

Miller might, for example, have ended the novel with Nina's pregnancy alone, but she doubles the emotional impact when Nina, as narrator, chooses to close the novel with a flashback to a time prior to her own birth: at the moment when Lainey's water breaks, announcing the birth of a child born with autism, a boy named Randall. David and Lainey are making love, an experience that "felt nearly holy" to Lainey, who "thought of it in words that came to her from religion, words like *riven, cleft*" (105), an association that David considers "nearly blasphemous" (123). Significantly, Nina will come to see this moment as her mother does, despite the fact that Randall's affliction has such tragic effects upon the Eberhardt family. In fact, despite his autism, or perhaps because of it, Randall plays a key part in the lives of all the Eberhardts. The novel itself actually spans the years of Randall's life, from 1950 to 1979. During these years David and Lainey separate because of their deep conflicts over the cause of Randall's illness and his proper care, and Nina frequently finds herself torn by divided loyalties. The drama begins in the kitchen where Nina, still a toddler, cries "No, man!" (43) when she sees the piercing eyes of Freud in a picture hanging on the wall. To comfort Nina, Lainey takes down the picture of Freud that David had hung, explaining to her psychiatrist husband that because Freud's "piercing stare had frightened Nina," she had replaced it with "a slightly overexposed photograph of

him with his wife in a garden," a photo David describes, condescendingly, as "more domesticated" (43). This moment announces Miller's revisionary intentions, locating the conflict in David and Lainey's divergent world views, views apparent in their preferences for different rhetorics: David's is identified as scientific, specifically psychoanalytic; Lainey's as a "pre-Freudian" unorthodox spirituality (345).

The conflict between these different systems of belief is dramatized by the family's use of language. For example, metaphors of "sickness" and "cure" recur in this highly verbal family, metaphors which have different meanings for Nina's parents, whose phrases come from different familial and professional contexts. David's notion of "cure" comes, not only from psychiatry, but from a family in which his mother ran the family business while his pharmacist father openly committed adultery. By contrast, Lainey's minister father is faithful to his wife but traditional in his views of women. He discourages Lainey's desire to prepare for the ministry, despite her deep spirituality and intelligence. The conflict between the Eberhardts is apparent, for example, when Lainey argues, "We say almost everything is a disease. But that's not a fact; it's a judgment. Why don't we just say it's not. Let's just say it's not. What happens then?" (154), and a quarrel with David follows immediately. Lainey's spirituality is also evident in her response to a dream that her oldest son tells her. Randall appeared in a dream, "cured" (344), Mack says, to which Lainey responds, "'Oh, what did he say?'" (345). In contrast to a Freudian analysis of dreams, which would interpret Randall's appearance as the fulfillment of Mack's wish, Lainey's response suggests that dreams "could still have a nearly biblical quality. She was like some pre-Freudian who believes that dreams, even the dreams of others, carry messages for her. That word can come this way--if not from God, then from a beloved son" (345). It is not surprising, then, that Randall's care becomes Lainey's ministry whereas David, who assumes that his wife has caused his son's illness, opposes her efforts to care for Randall in the home.

That David views his wife as the cause of Randall's condition is evident from his own written account, a journal in which he uses the abbreviation *R* for his observations of Randall, later shifting his attention to observations of *L*, his wife, Lainey. His clinical tone denies the pain he suffers when, after seeing his two-year-old son riding as "emperor" in the neighborhood Fourth of July parade, he finally ends his denial, confronting the fact that something is terribly wrong with Randall. At this moment,

> it seems the other children, the parade itself, the adultwatching, all swirl and blur, are only color, motion, like the background in a photograph. Dead in the middle, motionless in the carriage he shares with his tiny queen, sits Randall, unseeing, inert, his sequined, glittering cardboard crown perched square on his head. (21)

Randall is an Oedipus who will never declare his independence, who will never tell his story, though David doesn't yet know this. Seeking a scientific explanation and cure for Randall's condition, David accepts Bruno Bettelheim's psychoanalytic explanation that autism is caused by a "refrigerator mother" who unconsciously rejects her child, a view that finally ends in David and Lainey's divorce. As Nina reads her father's journal, she understands that her mother had been injured by her father's professional point of view:

> Slowly the pattern emerges: a medical system that can't, won't, provide answers about Randall that don't implicate my mother; my mother desperately insistent that he's the one who needs help, not her; my father implicitly a part of the system that's making the accusations, that's saying she's the one who caused the disease. (26)

Within the scientific context, Lainey has little chance of being heard; her faith finds expression only in her care for Randall and in her desire for more children, a desire David does not share. In retrospect, Nina recognizes her father's hostility to Lainey's childbirth "cure" in his nicknames for his three youngest daughters--Nina, Mary, and Sarah--all born after the autistic Randall. David often greets his three daughters as "the unexpected guests," "the surprise party," "the extras," "the coup de grace," or "the last straws" (5), all phrases that indicate these children were not wanted. These phrases also fail to differentiate Nina from her younger sisters, evidence that she has no individual identity for her father. Because the need for "singularity" is so important to Nina at this stage of her maturation, she takes up photography to disidentify with her mother and sisters, hoping to achieve recognition from her father. The camera enables Nina to escape from the pain of family life by distancing herself with clinical observations similar to those of her powerful father. Just as David records his observations of Randall's autism, Nina at first uses her camera to manage her feelings about Randall. Lainey notices Nina's preoccupation with photographing Randall, and years later she remarks, while looking through the family photo album, "I used to think that you were trying to get some handle on him by taking his picture over and over. That you were trying to solve some mystery" (430). During this same period, Nina also adopts her father's mother-blaming views.

Her adolescent arrogance first becomes apparent when, at age thirteen, she has just received a camera as a gift from her father who, at this time, has separated from Lainey. While eating popcorn with her mother and two younger sisters, a ritual of togetherness, Nina asserts her singularity, declaring her difference from her sisters and her independence from her mother. Nina has decided not to attend summer camp with her younger sister, as in previous years, but instead to take a course in photography at the Art Institute. To separate herself from her younger sisters who are snuggled against their mother on her bed, Nina holds her camera and sits "at the foot [of the bed], no closer" (220) to protect her fragile new individuality. From this distance, she challenges her mother's narrative authority. Lainey is talking about her children, expressing understandable maternal concern for her oldest daughter Liddie, who is just home from college and already intensely involved with a young man named Gregory, when Nina announces with confidence, "I think Liddie *will* marry Gregory" (221). It is Nina's knowledge that Liddie and Gregory have had sex, based on her secret voyeurism, that gives her such self-assurance at this moment. Of course, readers know, as Nina will know only in retrospect, that by 1965 when this scene takes place, even "nice" girls did not necessarily marry after sex. As the adult Nina also recognizes, her mother's wish that her daughters not marry before age thirty comes from her deep love for them.

Lainey recognizes that Nina is using her camera to assert her superiority, for she says, "Look at Nina, making us get little and unimportant in her magic lens" to which Nina responds, grinning, "It's true. You're shrimps. A million miles away" (223). Minutes later Nina's humor turns into hostility. While Lainey is trying to help Nina figure out the directions for her camera, she accuses her mother of always exaggerating things. Nina's tone antagonizes Lainey who had been telling the story of a previous summer when, because of the polio scare, she had "spent hours--hours, I promise you--boiling dishes and sterilizing things the year Randall was born" (224). With a "blank, unsympathetic" face, Nina had replied, "You're exaggerating, Mother" (224), defiantly repeating her accusation. Lainey responds with sarcasm, calling her "my sweet judge" and adding "how very helpful" it is that Nina can tell when she exaggerates. "Perhaps you'd like to tell me--to tell us all--tell us how you know so very much about it all' (225), Lainey says. Afterward, ashamed of her angry sarcasm, Lainey recalls that she had associated Nina's self-assured and arrogant tone of voice with the voices of "David and the pediatrician, the two men talking together [about Randall] in those resonant, professional tones Lainey hated" (225). This same tone would also have been evident in David's clinical descriptions of Randall in the journal which Lainey had discovered and read.

When the adolescent Nina adopts this tone, she identifies with her father whom she sees as having escaped from the burdens of family life. In this same popcorn-eating scene, however, Lainey describes the absent David as living the life of a bachelor, pretending to be 30 again, while she is "a fat elderly lady with so many kids she doesn't know what to do" (221). The adolescent Nina wants to be an "escapee" from the old woman in the shoe, as her father and Liddie appear to be, but the adult Nina recognizes this desire as a symptom of "matrophobia," a phobia that Adrienne Rich identifies as pervasive in our culture. Matrophobia is apparent not only in David's mother-blaming psychiatric views, but in his affairs with other women. His fear of aging, of mortality, prompts him to escape the family, leaving the burden of Randall's care to Lainey while he dates other women, some young enough to be his daughters. David's vision, as both a psychiatrist and a father, silences the maternal, repressing that which is associated with the life of the body, with births and deaths. It is this same tunnel vision, Miller implies, that leads psychiatrists such as Bruno Bettelheim to blame mothers for children's supposed psychological problems.[2] David finally recognizes that Bettelheim is wrong, that "Randall's illness was only bad luck, fate. He'd known that Lainey hadn't caused it, he'd known that he was wrong, had been wrong, to think so" (286). It is not accidental that David's revelation occurs while he is putting Randall's urine-soaked sheets into the washer, a "Lainey-like" chore that he has seldom performed.

Likewise, Nina's self-revision does not occur until she too has been placed in a "Lainey-like" position. Nina's change takes place after she has suffered a miscarriage that the doctor explains as nature's way of aborting a malformed foetus, a situation reminiscent of her mother's prior to the birth of Randall. Up until this point, Nina's profession had been a means for distancing herself from the maternal, for containing it, as had her father and Freud before her (3). Although her parents are now divorced, Nina goes home to recover and to try to solve the puzzle of her place in the family. In the guest room of her mother's apartment, in which the memoirs of family life are now stored, Nina literally sorts through "the unpacked boxes and trunks" (14). She and Lainey talk about photos in the family albums, but during this same visit she also shows her father some of her recent professional photographs of children on a playground. She explains, "I'd been experimenting with a technique that results in a central sharp image around which the background appears to whirl in dizzying motion" (17), a technique meant to evoke the experience of childhood, she says, "when you focus on what's important to you so clearly that everything else swims out of your consciousness" (18). Recalling his own painful memory of his son as the little emperor of the Independence Day Parade, the inert center of a blurred background, David tells Nina that he doesn't especially like her photographs. Despite deteriorating eyesight, the "tunnel vision" of old age, he dismisses Nina's work with the comment, "It's all really a gimmick, isn't it?" (18) Nina, who is "stung" by her father's words, defends her work with the explanation that technique can be defined, in fact, as "gimmick perfected" (18). Fortunately, David is honest enough to recognize his cruelty and to apologize, explaining later that his response to her photographs was based on some unconscious associations directly linked to painful memories of family life.

With this confession, he hands Nina the journal in which he had recorded his observations of *R* and *L*, revealing his mother-blaming view of Lainey that had ended their marriage. It is a view of the family drama which he later revised, but which continues to burden him with guilt. Since both David and Nina have chronicled family life, we are invited to make certain comparisons. Unlike David's clinical point of view in the journal and unlike the children's point of view that Nina captures with her camera, the novel itself offers a complex narrative of familial perspectives that shift in time and space. It becomes apparent that Nina, the adult narrator, has revised her former self, the Nina who, as a photographer, sought to disidentify with her mother and sisters. Nina's narrative point of view is fluidly familial, with temporal shifts from one generation to another, as well as spatial shifts from one member of the family to another, from David's perception, for example, to Lainey's, or from Nina's to her older brother, Macklin's. The opening scene of *Family Pictures* highlights this novelistic technique. On the occasion of Mack's fourteenth birthday party, the narrator recalls, the usually silent Randall had spoken. "It seems as clear to me as a picture I might have taken," Nina begins, but her mother and older sister Liddie argue that Randall never spoke after age four, recalling that Nina, who was just an infant at the time, couldn't possibly remember hearing Randall speak. Liddie claims that, in fact, Nina has "appropriated" her memory, just as she has "everything in our family's history," changing it to suit her own needs. "But that's the way it is in a family, isn't it?" (4) asks Nina as narrator, not insisting upon her version of the truth, but rather acknowledging that stories get passed around, "polished and embellished," until the facts can no longer be objectively determined.

In addition, the narrator explains that, over time, one's own perspective changes. "Your perspective, your way of telling

the story--of seeing it--changes as time passes. As you change" (4). Thus, Nina's story, which is embedded in family life, changes, as does her view of the family. A more mature Nina comes to value, not the isolated Freud with the "piercing" eyes, but the Freud her mother had chosen: a Freud "who looked puzzled...[who] was frowning into the sun in front of some rosebushes. His wife's hand rested on his shoulder like a claim, though she held her body a little distance from him" (43). Likewise, as narrator of her family's story, Nina does not portray herself as having clinically detached "piercing" eyes or as situated above and outside her characters, but rather as a sometimes "puzzled" participant observer located on the same plane as others in her family. Nina is a dialogic rather than a monologic narrator, to use Mikhail Bakhtin's distinction, not only because she occupies the same democratic plane as that of her characters, which makes her both the subject and object of narration, but also because in the very process of narration, she herself changes as a result of relationships with others. Nina's shifting preferences for the "piercing" and for the "puzzled" Freud show how she must revise Freud's family romance if she herself is not to be devalued, as Lainey was by David and, more generally, as mothers are by our entire society.

Following her miscarriage, Nina is finally ready to imagine her mother's point of view in the family. It is for this reason that Nina tries to make a scene between her now divorced parents. This re-enactment of the family frame takes place when David, who is engaged to be married, comes to Lainey's apartment to pick up Nina for dinner. Seeing his former wife painting theater sets, David remarks, "Still making scenes, I see" (462), a witty comment at which his former wife laughs. She understands the joke as a reference to both the sets she is painting, as well as to his own guilt for having blamed Lainey for "making scenes" about Randall. More generally, the phrase "making scenes" is a reference to the family drama in which they have all played their parts. It becomes apparent, for example, that Nina herself is given to making scenes, for she returns her father's journal in the presence of her mother, even though she knows that his mother-blaming journal is the major cause of her parents' divorce. If Nina is trying to "cure" her own psychic wound, she is still doing so at the expense of her mother. However, the more mature Nina, the narrator, acknowledges this act as egocentric. She recognizes her egocentricity during her adolescence when she had imagined herself the star of the family drama. For example, in 1966 Nina "could barely see the events in the world of weather or in her parents' lives, she was so blinded by those taking place inside her" (289), but during this same year her father had returned to the family after a period of separation, and Randall had finally been moved to an institution. Nina had moved into the room recently vacated by her autistic brother. Yet the family had become "merely the stage on which Nina's life was acted out" (293), as if Nina now wants for herself the place at center-stage which Randall had once occupied in the family drama.

With spatial re-configurations such as these within the family home, Miller represents changes in Nina's subjectivity as she makes that inward journey by which a woman seeks to understand herself, not as an object of male desire, but as an agent of her own desire. As Jessica Benjamin suggests, spatial images are associated with inter-subjective identity. For example, early in the novel Nina and her younger sisters go outside to play a game called "The Movies" in which they spy on their neighbors from the darkness outside lighted windows. In their imaginative play they watch adults, including the flirtations of their parents at parties, to understand their own emerging sexuality. Later, Nina replaces "The Movies" with her camera which also provides an imaginative space in which she can try out different identities. Unlike the movies game, however, the camera enables Nina to achieve a sense of singularity and, like her psychiatrist father, imagine herself as an "escapee" from the family. Nevertheless, during this same period of her life, Nina is very much contained within the family drama, a fact made apparent by her move into the bedroom vacated by her mute brother Randall. The lives of both Nina and her brother Mack have been profoundly affected by Randall, and they enact their grief in the space of their mute brother's former bedroom. High on marijuana, together they tear down Nina's new "feminine" wallpaper as Mack chants, "Do this in remembrance of me." David sees only destruction in their act, whereas they see it as their "only meaningful ceremony of goodbye" to Randall (307). Despite David's psychiatric training, he does not recognize his children's need to ritualize their grief for Randall; in fact, David defines their relationship in Freudian terms, as like " a little romance" (301). In a sense, the family has only "papered over" their grief, covering Randall's wall-markings with a paper deemed suitable for a girl.

At this same time, however, the adolescent Nina had been trying on new identities, including her identity as a sexual object. Experimenting with her mother's lipsticks, for example, she looked at herself in her dressing room mirror but then "picked up her camera and lifted it to her face, looking through the view finder into the glass at the hidden girl looking back at her from behind her camera" (296). Moments later, when her brother Mack, who is home from college, stopped at the door, asking, "Your room now?" she nodded in assent. "Some transformation," he added (296). But what exactly is the transformation? Trying on her mother's lipstick, "She felt transformed, sexual" (305), but she did not want to become like her mother. At the same time, Nina does want to become an adult, though her brother, something of a Holden Caufield, values her for the innocence that he himself has somehow lost. In fact, only Randall can truly remain innocent. Nina wants to lose her innocence, but she resists playing the woman's part, which is why, seeing herself reflected in the mirror, she picked up her camera. Whereas the mirror reflects her feminine position as an object of male desire, the phallic camera allows her to define herself as a desiring subject. In other words, Nina resists becoming an object, refusing to be victimized by the male gaze, the position her mother occupies in her father's journal.

Nevertheless, Nina's desire for subjectivity is soon complicated by her first love affair, In this romantic drama she plays the traditional female role. Nina is still in high school when she lands a part in Miller's *The Crucible* when she meets Philip Olson, a university student who is the play's producer. Significantly, in this male written and produced script, Nina does not speak. Instead, as one of the hysterical girls, she only screams. By aggressively pursuing the play's director, Nina may

have been trying to reverse these gender positions; however, like the heroine of a traditional romance, she idealizes Philip, perhaps because she sees him as the artist she wishes to become herself. This romantic fantasy ends when Nina, fearing she is pregnant, runs away from home. With the arrival of her menstrual period, she feels as if Philip's "power were in the waste blood flowing so slowly out of her body," at which "she felt a sad and emptied sense of freedom, a reluctant joy at being returned to her solitary self" (421). Afterward, Nina begins to see a psychiatrist, a woman who helps her to understand her need to seek out a certain kind of man in order to recreate the constant state of drama, or heightened tension, that has characterized her family life. In the safety of this psychiatric space, Nina also learns to define her "singularity" with her camera, rather than in disastrous love affairs.

However, only after her own marriage to a stable man, who is nevertheless relieved at Nina's miscarriage, does she become aware that she has used her art to distance herself from her mother and sisters. After reading her father's journal, she recognizes it as an analogue to her camera, which has allowed her to objectify others and to imagine herself as above and outside the domestic space of the family, the space which had contained her mother for so many years. This insight into her own devaluation of her mother's life marks the point at which Nina begins to seek affiliation with her mother and sisters. This change is apparent, for example, when she asks her pregnant sister Mary, who is also a doctor, to pose nude. Mary agrees to be photographed, but she jests, "You know, Nina, I think maybe we need to sit down together while I explain to you the function of repression in human life," to which Nina replies that she takes pictures to have "my little victory over all those Freudian processes" (484). This response suggests that Nina has reconciled herself with a Freud whose eyes are neither piercing nor puzzled, but rather with the Freud who, as Mary reminds hers, regarded art as a way "maybe not to escape neurosis but to make use of it, or transform it somehow" (484).

Nina is still puzzled over her place in this family puzzle when, near the end of the novel, she is hired to take professional photographs at a large family reunion. Wearing several cameras around her neck as "sort of armor against intimacy" (490), she snaps the obligatory group photo, this one in the shape of "a widening triangle, with the grandparents at its peak, the immediate children on the first step down" and so on, until "at last, one tiny member of the last generation crawled forward and sat back as though to look with amazement on all the other generations that had labored and suffered and loved to produce him" (490-91). At this moment, which mirrors the narrative strategy of the novel itself, Nina-as-subject stands outside the frame of this family's photo, but she also imagines herself as object, as the child who sits inside the frame, looking with amazement at his family. Nina tacks this photograph to the wall beside her photos of her pregnant sister Mary until, finally, the mystery of her relationship to her own family is solved. Newly married and pregnant again herself, she looks at the photographs which, together, with their depiction of the individual and the family, explain why she ends her narrative with the scene of her parents' love-making just prior to Randall's birth. Nina has come to view sex as her mother does, as holy, as part of the life force that creates both new generations and works of art. Acknowledging that other members of her family might put the puzzle together differently, Nina decides that "the family held the answer. That it was really a portrait of a kind of reckless courage, a testament to the great loving carelessness at the heart of every family's life, even ours" (492).

[1]Hirsch further explains that, according to Freud, the family romance is "an imaginary interrogation of origins, an interrogation which embeds the engenderment of narrative within the experience of family. Through fantasy, the developing individual liberates himself from the constraints of family by imagining himself to be an orphan or a 'bastard' and his 'real' parents to be more noble than the 'foster' family in which he is growing up. The essence of the Freudian family romance is the imaginative act of replacing the parent (for boys clearly the father) with another, superior figure" (9).

[2]Miller assumes that readers will be familiar with Bettelheim's argument that the "refrigerator mother," whose love for her child is coldly ambivalent, causes the child's muteness, an illness that only psychiatry can cure. See Bettelheim's *The Empty Fortress: Infantile Autism and the Birth of the Self* (New York: Macmillan, 1967); for a refutation of Bettelheim, and an argument that autism is a neurological rather than a psychological problem, see Jane Taylor McDonnell's "Mothering an Autistic Child: Reclaiming the Voice of the Mother" in *Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities* (Knoxville: U of Tennessee Press, 1991), 58-75.

[3]For a full analysis of the maternal in Freud's writings, see Madelon Sprengnether's *The Spectral Mother: Freud, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1990).

[4]Invariably, David has trouble reading and understanding "feminine" feelings; he seems as obtuse as the patronizing husband, a medical doctor, in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." For example, when Lainey papered Randall's room, David greeted her domestic improvement with the ironic comment, "'If wallpaper could cure this family, we'd certainly all be in great shape'" (277), trivializing Lainey's attempt to manage her grief.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 25.

A Mermaid's Song

It must be told -
It must be told
And so it is...

Unspoken words
A heart carries
Inside itself.
Too heavy to bear,
Too hard to say
But there,
Telling its story
Everyday
To a life that can't stop listening
To the sounds of the past
Saying to the present
It must be told -
It must be told...

Little girls listen to their heartbeats,
As their fingers fondle the brush ends of their braids
Roped tightly together
Bound by brown rubber bands
Doubled over thick clumps of hair falling gracelessly
Over bent shoulder blades.

They listen to the heavy breathing
Of a whiskey-sodden father
And smell the stench of a man who hated himself.

They feel the nights
Descending with the
Menace of the dark;
Unforgiving nights
That keep the secrets of the house,
Til daylight gives them away
To everyone - to everyone - to everyone.

And when they all know,
And they will,
Little girls must hide,
Or turn inside themselves
To flowing ivory dresses,
Silverhandled mirrors at rest
On soft linen lace,
And yellow roses in cut-crystal vases
That catch the corners of the sun,
Spilling its light
Across pianos
Lacquered bright,
In empty, gorgeous rooms
Of colored-carpeting,

Polished floors,
French doors,
And bound books,
Fitted in shelves that rise
To pale blue mouldings
Framing the beloved space.

Then little girls must see the blanket
Pulled across the mother's face-
muted rage in every breath
That heaves beneath
The faded quilt
Now worn and used
Like the life
That clutches
To its dingy pattern.

And when the heartbeats stop,
A moment's pause in its
Unrelenting history,
The fingers fall
From the blunted ends of hair
And rise to flooded eyes
To clear the mist ...

And little girls must listen once again.

By Sondra Melzer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24.

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NCTE Calendar of Events, 1992-1993

November 18-23	82nd Annual Convention of NCTE, Louisville, Kentucky
January 7-9	Conference on College Composition and Communication, Winter Workshop, Clearwater Beach, Florida
March 18-20	Spring Conference of NCTE (elementary and secondary school teachers, teacher education), Richmond, Virginia
April 1-3	Conference on College Composition and Communication, Annual Convention, San Diego, California
June 6-9	Summer Institute for Teachers of Literature, Sponsored by the College Section of NCTE, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
November 17-22	83rd Annual Convention of NCTE, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Teaching Ain't No Joke: The Trap of Domesticity for Women Professors

By Lana Hartman Landon

Recently two women colleagues and I were discussing the frustration we feel when trying to write and do research. We often find ourselves wondering why we never have time for anything but teaching. Even though others might assume that it is the demands of family life that get in the way of women's scholarship, in our experience it is teaching which seems to consume all of our time and energy. While we are, in fact, excellent teachers, we are not always sure that is enough. We know that in our profession advancement, recognition, and opportunity require a higher profile than one achieved by being excellent teachers at a small liberal arts college.

While we want recognition and have ideas for projects, we never quite get to the stage of setting them down or fleshing them out. Many of our male colleagues teaching similar loads with the same ratio of new to old preparations seem to accomplish so much more. Unless we are somehow lacking in ability because of our gender (which we are unable to accept), there must be some reason why we do not produce more than we do. I think that gender is relevant to what we are experiencing: we have turned teaching into homemaking.

I. They Call Me "Dr." Reed

"Housekeeping ain't no joke."

-Louisa May Alcott

Growing up female in the age of June Cleaver and Donna Reed meant that many of us expected to achieve a certain style of competence in our domestic sphere. We can joke about Donna Reed's pearls and high heels as inappropriate clothing for mopping the kitchen, but we didn't really ever see her doing the nastiest chores of housekeeping. As girls who helped around the house, we were not naive about what those chores were, yet we were able to accept her calm and immaculate persona. We were attracted to this woman who was in control, on top of housework, in a way our mothers were not. Donna Reed was serene; she seemed to be competent. We wanted to be competent like her, not harried like our mothers. Most of my friends work outside the home, and our standards of household efficiency are much lower than our mothers' were. Chores that I remember my mother doing every week are done once a month at my house (and usually my husband does them). I am less a paragon of household management than any of the television moms of my childhood. It doesn't bother me much, either. I am beginning to think that the compulsive behaviors that would be necessary to have the fantasy home (with clean socks for everyone, ironed sheets, homemade bread, flower garden, and handsewn Halloween costumes for my child) and all the necessary drive (and with it all the fear of being incompetent, unprepared, messy, and disorganized) have gone into my teaching.

Does it really benefit the students, or is it the academic equivalent of spring cleaning?

When I talk with my female colleagues, how frequently I hear of preparations that are redone every semester (whether they need it or not), of color-coded filing systems for each class, of elaborate handouts, and of last minute lecture revisions by dawn's early light. I do it, too. I can't imagine why I spend so much time on them.

But then, nothing's too good for my family.

II. Geegaws and Effluvia: Taking Time to Make Things "Nice"

"By the way,
The works of women are symbolical.
We sew, sew, prick our fingers, dull our sight,
Producing what? A pair of slippers, sir,
To put on when you're weary -- or a stool
To stumble over and vex you ... 'curse that stool!'
Or else at best, a cushion, where you lean
And sleep, and dream of something we are not
But would be for your sake. Alas, alas!
This hurts most, this -- that, after all, we are paid
The worth of our work, perhaps."

-Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Aurora Leigh

Teaching can become for women a work that is "symbolical," like the handwork Aurora Leigh sees as a substitute for art. If teaching becomes the sole focus of a professor's career and begins to take the place of scholarship, it can become all-consuming. Each carefully rendered handout or transparency, each carefully (and lovingly) graded paper is another doily, another artifact of care. But while the time spent on teaching and on preparation for teaching may represent care, it may not, in fact, achieve any significant academic purpose except to make us feel that we are the best because we care the most; we make things "nice." Like housewives, we may judge our work by the amount of time we spend, rather than the results we achieve. Do we need to change texts very year? Does it really benefit the students, or is it the academic equivalent of spring cleaning? Are we engaged in teaching as a profession or as an exercise in womanly virtue?

My women colleagues and I spend a great deal of time on our teaching, but is it all that necessary? Do we take refuge in our classrooms/homes (making things nice) at the expense of our participation in the larger arenas of our profession? Josephine Donovan writes:

> In the household women have historically created objects for use rather than for exchange .... Production for use means creation of material that is consumed by the immediate family and not sold off or exchanged. It is material that is valued for itself, for its immediate physical and qualitative worth, and not for its abstract quantitative monetary or exchange value (102).

To make the analogy between the household and the classroom is to see the obvious: women professors concentrating on the immediate, consumable lecture (an "object" for use) rather than writing the scholarly article which has exchange value. We turn the classroom into a domestic sphere and find (to no one's surprise) that

teaching is valued less than scholarship, just as homemaking is valued less than working in the marketplace.

III. Teaching as Attachment/Scholarship as Achievement

> "Instead of attachment, individual achievement rivets the male imagination, and great ideas or distinctive activity defines the standard of self-assessment and success."
>
> - Carol Gilligan
> *A Different Voice*

The balance between teaching and scholarship is tricky for everyone. Women who privilege teaching approach it as relationship and see their work as moral work, as involving attention, care, and even self sacrifice. The classroom is not a means, but an end. The classroom is not a place to try out our new theories or work on lectures which will become papers, which will become books, with the students benefiting from our insights. Rather, the classroom is a place where we help others, enable them to achieve rather than achieving ourselves; and, like a good parent, we feel satisfaction, even joy, in watching growth. Teaching as nurturing means that we react as often as we act. This reaction, this agility or nurture, requires constant attention to the needs of others and assumes that no two classes (any more than any two families) are ever the same *or should be*. Hence, the constant changing of preparations, texts, materials, and approaches is necessary because, since the students are always different, the needs are always different. A teacher focused on nurture is need-driven, and those needs are not necessarily her own.

While the nurture of students is admirable, it has the potential to be a trap. Our children grow up, but there are always more students, always new people to teach. Thus, we end up feeling that there is never time for anything else. And there isn't. The nurturing teacher sets up a situation in which she can't even take credit for her teaching because she sees herself as a collaborator, not the source. She dooms herself to feeling unappreciated or, even worse, unaccomplished. She is trapped in an academic feminine mystique: There is no time for traditional scholarship and nothing tangible to point to at the end of one's career except the achievements of her students. A lifetime in the classroom has been consumed, a feast but not a feat.

IV. Alice Doesn't Teach Here Anymore

What is to be done, then? We value teaching too much to slight it. We hunger for recognition, so we have to find ways to get it. It is dangerous to lose ourselves in a new kind of self-sacrifice. As Gilligan warns,

> If mid-life brings an end to relationships, to the sense of connection on which she relies, as well as to the activities of care through which she judges her worth, then the mourning that accompanies all life transitions can give way to the melancholia of self-deprecation and despair (171).

We do not want to become the generation of invisible women, women who entered the academy, taught like blazes, and sank without a trace. Either we have to find a new, more visible way to recognize the teaching that is an investment of time, creativity, and energy equivalent to the most rigorous scholarship, or we have to approach the classroom differently. We cannot let ourselves become the domestics of our profession, the angels in the classroom.

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Hanging Up My Bones To Dry

What lies we tell ourselves
To believe in our faiths
And to keep on, just living--
I could never figure it our
Why my mother would hang clothes,
Frozen in the basket and stiff
In the January wind, my mother,
Working in the freezing rain
To hang clothes in fresh air,
She said it was a small price
To pay for happiness.

Under her skirt, the wind would whip her
And dance around her stumpy feet,
Laughing in her virtuous face;
Her lips would crack, her eyes would water,
Then, out loud in the bitter air, cold
She would curse Saturday morning, her day off,
Her husband, five children, and
That stupid cat looking on in disbelief.

It's not that she was too weak;
Too beaten to see the point;
It's not that she had given in
To the enemy's clever trick;
It's that the winter sun
Really did make the laundry fresh--
Save money and electricity--
Prove that she was a godly woman, and
Made every piece smell better,
wear better,
Like life when what you believe is really true,
Even when your frost bitten fingers
are too numb
To feel your freezing ass
Getting a pinch of reality.

By Betty Hart

The Definition of Self, The Recognition of Other in Two Children's Stories

By Mary Elizabeth Bezanson and Deborah L. Norland

Mary Elizabeth became a feminist the day in third grade she realized the meaning of:

> Peter Piper had a wife and couldn't keep her,
> Put her in a pumpkin shell,
> And there he kept her very well
> (Mother Goose, 1974).

The sense of outrage that small verse created remains to this day. The fear that others were not outraged also remains. Both anecdotal reports and personal experience suggest that children's literature affects, intentionally or not, a reader's world view of society. Gains (1979) suggests that rhetoric alters an individual's attitude or actions. Two interrelated questions are then raised: Does research support our intuitive conception of the rhetorical nature of children's literature? And if children's literature is indeed rhetorical, then what is children's literature persuading children to think or to do? This essay explores each of these questions by first examining the rhetorical nature of children's literature and then by providing a rhetorical analysis of two children's works.

A survey of the educational research on the nature of children's literature supports a rhetorical conception of that literature. Through literature, children are taught attitudes and actions appropriate for themselves and their society. Glazer (1991) proposes that "Literature, through content and through activities based on content and theme, can strengthen the development of self-concept and self-esteem" (p. 208). Books are written with the intention of presenting role models for children to emulate (Glazer, 1991). Luckens (1982) maintains that books help children discover themselves and explore the world. She comments, "Words are merely words, but real literature for any age is words chosen with skill and artistry to give the readers pleasure and to help them understand themselves and others" (p. 9). Book experiences introduce the unknown, clarify and refine the known, and define the parameters of choice for one's attitudes and behavior.

Books are written from the world view of the authors who write what they want the reader to know. Norton (1991) and Glazer (1991) caution readers to be aware of the author's bias when reading children's literature. Norton (1991) comments "that when evaluating themes in children's books, consider what the author wanted to convey about life or society ..." (p. 98). More succinctly, Glazer (1982) states, "When you read books to children, be aware that you are showing them one perception of how the world is structured" (p. 189). Children interact with the story, but can only take from literature something already put there by the author (Luckens, 1982). Literature may be seen as a way of opening children to an array of options, but only to those options authors wish to present.

The child is the "student-novice" (Luckens, 1982, p. 7) before the writer. Reading literature turns children "from being passive followers to ardent advocates" (p. 7, 8). Huck, Hepler, and Hickman are not as extreme as Luckens while still supporting the persuasive nature of children's literature. Huck, Hepler, and Hickman (1987) maintain that "literature illuminates the human condition by shaping our insights" (p. 4). One may not like to believe that literature possesses the power to alter a reader's point of view. But children's literature is written to entice, motivate, and instruct (Norton, 1991).

The exact implications and effects of reading literature remain unknown (Russell, 1991). However, Russell (1991) states that "it is a fairly safe assumption that extensive reading will reinforce beliefs" (p. 41). In addition to being reinforced, beliefs can also be changed. One can safely assume that reading will alter or, at the very least, influence attitudes and behaviors.

We have seen that children's literature is indeed rhetorical. A rhetorical analysis should then reveal important, but perhaps unrecognized, features of that literature. Too often the rhetorical impact, for good or ill, of a specific story remains ambiguous for lack of direct comparison with another story. To avoid this problem, we now examine a comparative rhetorical analysis of one very popular contemporary children's story, Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* and one lesser known story, Alice McLerran's *The Mountain That Loved a Bird*. These stories were chosen for their influence among readers and similarity in subject area. Before turning to the rhetorical analysis itself, each of these issues will be briefly examined.

The influence of the stories can be demonstrated by discussing numbers of book clubs and educational publishers. Hardcover sales of *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein have exceeded one and a half million copies (*Fifth Book of Junior Authors*, 1983). If one agrees that books purchased are eventually read at least once, then *The Giving Tree* is a popular and favorite book. Distribution rights have been sold to at least one children's book club, The Trumpet Club, appearing in the "Primary Grades" (kindergarten through grade 3) sale flier in April 1991 and again in April 1992. A variety of people read Silverstein's *Tree*. Ministers use the story as sermon text, and teachers use the book as a parable (*Contemporary Authors*, 1983). One of Deborah's student teachers, with the support of the classroom teacher, had first-grade students successfully dramatize the story. The play was successful in terms of appeal; other first-grade classrooms in the building asked to see the dramatization. Deborah also knows counselors in at least one summer camp in Wisconsin that used *Tree* to demonstrate unconditional giving. Once can assume that other folk, including children and parents, also read the book. *The Giving Tree* is indeed a popular work.

Sales of Alice McLerran's *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* are not as significant as *The Giving Tree*. Only between 22,500 and 25,000 copies of *Mountain* have been sold in the United States (Norland phone interview with McLerran and Clements, September, 1991). Sales have been high in the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) with the initial 300,000 copies of the book printed in the USSR having been sold within the summer of its first release. The book is also now sold or hopes to be sold in other countries, including Japan, Finland, South Africa, and Germany (Ibid., 1991). *Mountain* has been used for grief counseling and dance choreography (Norland phone interview with McLerran, September, 1991). In addition, a representative from Picture Books Studio, publisher of *Mountain*, has stated that the book has been included in three basal reading

series (Norland phone interview with Clements, September, 1991).

Not only are these works influential for being widely read and quoted, but they also share the common theme of considering the function of the child in society. The persuasive focus of both stories centers on relationships, specifically, the definition of self and the recognition of other. A brief description of each story will establish the similarity of persuasive focus in these works.

Shel Silverstein's *The Giving Tree* involves the relationship between an apple tree and a boy. Initially their interactions appear mutually pleasing as the boy comes to swing on the tree's branches and eat her apples. As the boy grows, his demands also grow. He first takes her apples to sell for money, and then later he removes her branches to build a house; next he removes her trunk to build a boat; and finally, he comes to sit on her stump. Although the boy's demands escalate as he ages, the tree continually gives of herself, diminishing her self. After each exchange, the reader is told that the tree was happy. The boy and the apple tree are the only two characters, and the book focuses on their developing relationship.

Similarly, Alice McLerran's *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* explores the relationship between the bird Joy, her female descendants, and a mountain. In this story, a bird happens to rest on a barren mountain. The mountain becomes intrigued by her presence since no living thing has ever touched it. And the bird, pleased because no mountain had ever cared whether the bird came or went, promises that either she or one of her daughters will return each year. Ninety-nine years pass with the mountain experiencing greater happiness each year in Joy's arrival. On the 100th year, Mountain, knowing the desolation that comes with Joy's leaving, begins to cry. Unwittingly, Mountain's tears make its barren ground fertile. The bird, undaunted by Mountain's grief, continues to return, bringing seeds to the now habitable mountain. Trees and plants from Joy's seeds begin to grow. Mountain rejoices at this change and now cries with happiness, continuing to provide the water necessary for life. Finally, Joy returns with a twig to build a nest and to stay. Like *The Giving Tree*, *Mountain* focuses on two characters and their developing relationship.

Perhaps no relationship defines our self and our recognition of others more than the relationship between genders. And, through literature, children explore and test the nature and parameters of these relationships before forming their own relationships in adulthood. Both books, *Tree* and *Mountain*, make important comments on the relationship of female characters to other characters.

In each of the stories, that the dominant female main character functions as caregiver may be the only point of similarity between the two. Some readers may have a tendency to perceive any female character who nurtures as mother, yet this tendency too fully limits the reading of a given character's behavior. One must remember that lovers, friends, and teachers also nurture. In *Tree*, the apple tree willingly sacrifices first her fruit, then her ability to reproduce, and then her physical form in order to provide for the survival and happiness of a human male character. In fact, Tree is the one who suggests the solutions to the problems Boy raises. For example, when the boy first needs money she says, "I'm sorry, ... but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy" (Silverstein, 1964, p. 31 unnumbered). Each sacrifice is made willingly with no thought to her self or to her progeny. Her sole concern is to respond to Boy's requests, uncaring of the cost to her self.

In fact, Boy's happiness may indeed be the rhetorical focus of the work. The reader is never allowed to question how the tree may feel about these gifts which systematically diminish her. After all their interchanges, except the second to the last, the narrator is always there to remind the reader, "And the tree was happy" (Silverstein, 1965, pp. 24, 34, 40, unnumbered). Silverstein may well be tapping into a deeply held cultural myth that the nobility of being female comes from willingly nurturing another until one's self is absorbed.

In the penultimate interchange, the boy has come to chop down the tree's trunk in order to build a boat (Silverstein, 1965, pp. 43-44, unnumbered). Here, for the first time, the narrator allows the reader to feel any twinge concerning Tree's feelings. The narrator comments, "And the tree was happy ... but not really" (Ibid., pp. 45-46, unnumbered). However, the tree is not unhappy because she has given her self away, as we might expect; rather she is unhappy because she has nothing left to give. When the boy finally appears as an old man, the tree says, "I wish that I could give you something, ... but I have nothing left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry ..." (Ibid., p. 48, unnumbered). The tree apologizes for not being able to provide any more for the "boy." The final ironic twist is that the boy, now an old man, wants nothing more than a place to rest. The stump complies, and the reader is told, on the last page of the story, "And the tree was happy" (Silverstein, 1965, p. 51, unnumbered).

In contrast, the female character in *Mountain* behaves quite differently. When the mountain asks her to stay, she says, "Birds are living things. ... We must have food and water. Nothing grows here for me to eat; there are no streams from which I could drink" (McLerran, 1985, p. 3 unnumbered). Though she would not sacrifice her own life or the lives of her children, she becomes committed to nurturing the development of the mountain. When asked to return, she agrees saying,

> 'Because no mountain has ever before cared whether I came or went, I will make you a promise. Every spring of my life, I will return to greet you, and fly above you, and sing to you. And since my life will not last forever, I will give to one of my daughters my own name, Joy, and tell her how to find you. And she will name a daughter Joy also, and tell her how to find you' (McLerran, 1985, p. 5, unnumbered).

For Joy, before she will commit to developing a relationship with Mountain, she must be assured that Mountain has the ability to reciprocate her feeling. Here too, the female character finds the solution to the other's problem. While maintaining her commitment, she does not sacrifice her selfhood or her progeny, as Tree apparently does.

The contrast between the two stories becomes even more apparent when one examines those in relationship with Tree and Joy. In *Tree* a small boy begins by playing with an apple tree's branches, eventually, as a grown man, taking everything from her except her stump. During each of the episodes of demand, the

boy asks for and receives a gift and then leaves the tree for a number of years, only to have his demands escalate at odd intervals. There is no true reciprocation of the emotional commitment Tree has given to the relationship. As Strandburg and Livo (1986) recognize, "Obviously the sexist stereotype that the woman's role is to be passive and giving is expressed by the interaction of the boy and the tree" (p. 21). Mary Daly (1978) recognizes the element of violence, commenting that the story "is one of female rape and dismemberment" (p. 90). To compound the horror, the female actively participates in her gradual destruction. She demonstrates no grief over her loss, only happiness at the male's pleasure. In *Tree*, the male literally absorbs the female with no thought to her selfhood. The relationship between the self (Boy) and the other (Tree) becomes one of almost complete destruction.

In *Mountain* the developing relationship between the two main characters is far richer. Most subtly, since the narrator never specifies the gender of Mountain, perhaps a unique but important quirk of the English language, the reader does not see Mountain as being either female or male. Since gender remains such an important feature of human beings, a level of uncertainty exists within the story. The reader becomes unable to neatly pigeonhole the relationship between Joy and Mountain.

Further, the developing relationship between Mountain and Joy is based on mutual reciprocation, a presence with each other rather than on unilateral sacrifice. Mountain asks only that the bird return, something the bird is capable of doing without losing her selfhood. Having opened itself to life, Mountain responds by generously sharing that new life with the beings on its surface. The narrator tells the reader,

> Watching these living things find food and shelter on its slopes, the mountain suddenly felt a surge of hope. Opening its deepest heart to the roots of the trees, it offered them all of its strengths. The trees stretched their branches yet higher toward the sky, and hope ran like a song from the heart of the mountain into every tree leaf (McLerran, 1985, p. 17, unnumbered).

With the knowledge of life on its surface, Mountain hopes fervently for Joy's remaining. The reader is rewarded in their last interchange to learn, "Straight to the tallest tree on the mountain she flew, to the tree that had grown from the very first seed. She placed the twig on the branch in which she would build her nest. 'I am joy,' she sang, 'and I have come to stay'" (McLerran, 1985, p. 19, unnumbered). The relationship between Mountain and the other, Joy, becomes one of creation.

Undoubtedly, creation is the rhetorical focus of this work. From the mutual recognition of other develops not only an environment capable of fostering life, but the emergence of Mountain's self. On the very first page of the story, the narrator tells the reader, "The sun warmed the mountain and the wind chilled it, but the only touch the mountain knew was the touch of rain or snow. There was nothing more to feel" (McLerran, 1985, p.1, unnumbered). After generations of visits by Joy's progeny, Mountain felt hope and love and commitment to another. Mountain's selfhood literally develops through the relationship with generations of Joys.

As we have seen, there exist marked differences in the ways that the main characters relate in these stories as they define themselves and recognize others. In *The Giving Tree*, Tree sacrifices her self continually. Through her sacrifice her recognition of other consumes her. Tree's selfhood dwindles to almost nothing for the temporary happiness of a never-satisfied Boy. Ultimately, she has little left to give. Her gift is her own destruction. In *Mountain*, Joy gives of herself as she continually nurtures. Her recognition of other becomes the life source for the selfhood for both of them. Ultimately Joy's gift expands beyond herself and Mountain to a larger world. Her gift is creation.

There can be little doubt that literature alters both the way children see their world and their behaviors towards others within that world. Both *The Giving Tree* and *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* urge children to specific attitudes and actions both in their definition of self and in their search for other, and in the development of the relationship between the two. In *Tree*, the story may persuade the female reader to a life of sacrifice and persuade the male reader to expect such sacrifice. Alternately, in *Mountain*, the story may persuade readers of both genders that through freely giving of one's self and honestly recognizing others anything is possible.

Literature helps determine the parameters for choices children eventually make in their definition of self, their recognition of other, and the nature of their relationships. While to attribute motives for the selection of literature is difficult, there is a possibility that some adults may choose *The Giving Tree*, however unconsciously, because it teaches girls to give of themselves selflessly and teaches boys to expect such gifts. Certainly, *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* provides an alternate view by demonstrating the power of mutuality in relationships. As adults we must accept responsibility for the choices we make in the books shared with children since ultimately our choices tell us both something about the rhetoric of relationships.

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The Burden of Truth: The Voices of Lucielia and Mattie in Gloria Naylor's "Lucielia Louise Turner"

By Demetrice A. Worley

As an African American woman/writer/teacher/scholar, I am interested in the ways in which African American women writers portray their cultures/histories. Many of these authors' "fictional characters engage in perplexing struggles to maintain their human dignity and emotional sensitivity in an impersonal, alien, and frequently threatening world" (Tate xvi). Such is the case with Gloria Naylor's characters in *The Women of Brewster Place* where all of her women are struggling to survive as African Americans in a white-dominated society and as women in a male-dominated society.

These women characters play a variety of roles: partner, wife, lover, friend, or even child in their male-female relationships. These roles in themselves do not cause problems within the relationship unless there is a conflict between the way women act and the way they perceive reality. What happens to these women when they reject restrictive roles and take on new roles is illustrated in Gloria Naylor's "Lucielia Louise Turner," one of the short stories in *The Women of Brewster Place*. In this story, the title character Lucielia is a single mother who uses Mattie's strength and power to help her determine herself as a woman. Mattie is Lucielia's "motherline." Susan Willis, in *Specifying*, defines "motherline" as a woman who passes on survival knowledge to another generation (3). Such a woman can be a mother, sister, aunt, cousin, or another woman in the community, country, or world. This survival knowledge enables the next generation of women to learn from the successes and failures of the previous generation.

Mattie, the realist, seldom "ever spoke more than two sentences to anybody about anything. She didn't have to. She chose her words with the grinding precision of a diamond cutter's drill" (Naylor 91). A wise parent, Mattie speaks with precision. On the other hand, Lucielia, her surrogate daughter, has trouble finding the "exact" words to say what she means: Her words "kept circling in such a confusing pattern before her that she couldn't seem to grab even one to answer him with" (91). Child-like in her syntax, Lucielia does not know quite how to speak or how to organize her words. Primarily, Lucielia uses words to build the storybook life of her dreams. Nevertheless, her words, when the two women are discussing Eugene, have the strength of spun sugar. Like a teenager in love, Lucielia romantically describes him as a father and partner: "Oh, Mattie, you don't understand. He's really straightened up this time. He's got a new job on the docks that pays real good, and he was just so depressed before with the new baby and no work. You'll see. He's even gone out now to buy paint and stuff to fix up the apartment. And, and Serena needs a daddy" (91-92).

But Mattie instantly melts Lucielia's sugar-coated words: "You ain't gotta convince me, Ciel" (92). The reality of Mattie's statement is not lost on Lucielia; despite her wish to restrict Eugene to her romantic vision, she hears the truth behind Mattie's statement and knows she "wasn't talking to Mattie, she was talking to herself" (92).

Lucielia works hard to make real her fantasy life in which mother, father, and child live happily ever after. She is proud that her child knows her father's name. She says, "my da da is Gene" (96). However, Mattie again shatters the protective covering around Lucielia's dream world: "'Better teach her your name,' Mattie said, while playing with the baby's hand. 'She'll be using it more'" (92). Mattie, unlike Lucielia who is filled with unbridled optimism and self-delusion, is direct and grounded in reality. She speaks with the knowledge of a woman who has seen many single women who are heads of their households. By cutting to the reality of whose name the child will need to know, Mattie bursts the bubble of Lucielia's dream world. Fantasy has no chance of survival in Brewster Place. Only overt and covert knowledge, passed from one generation of African American women to the next directly aids the survival of African American women.

That Lucielia cannot argue with Mattie's cutting remark is revealed by her response: "Ciel's mouth flew open to ask her what she meant by that, but she checked herself" (92). She knows that Mattie speaks precisely and forthrightly: "It was useless to argue with Mattie. You could take her words however you wanted. The burden of truth lay with you, not with her" (92). Interpreting Mattie's comments involves what she doesn't say as well as what she does say. In *The Said and the Unsaid*, Stephen Tyler states:

> Every act of saying is a momentary intersection of the 'said' and the 'unsaid.' Because it is surrounded by an aureola of the unsaid, an utterance speaks more than it says, mediates between past and future, transcends the speaker's conscious thought, passes beyond his [/her] manipulative control, and creates in the mind of the hearer worlds unanticipated. From within the infinity of the 'unsaid,' the speaker and the hearer, by a joint act of will, bring into being what was 'said' (qtd. in Tannen 24).

Interpreting the blank spaces between Maggie's words, Lucielia starts to argue with Maggie, but then stops because she senses that Maggie is right.

Although subconsciously recognizing the truth behind Mattie's words, Lucielia cannot consciously accept the reality of the role she is playing in her relationship with Eugene. At one time Lucielia accuses Mattie of hating Eugene (as if Mattie's hate would be the only explanation for her speaking truthfully about her feelings toward him). Mattie responds to this accusation with love, not hate: "' Naw, honey, ' and she had cupped both hands on Ciel's face. 'Maybe I just love you too much'" (95). Here, and throughout the story, Mattie's words force Lucielia to look below surface meanings. In *Talking Voices*, Deborah Tannen explains that in a dialogue the speaker aids the listener in actively creating shared knowledge "by requiring the listener...to fill in unstated meaning, indirectness contributes to a sense of involvement through mutual participation in sensemaking" (23). Every time Lucielia has to fill in the "unstated meaning" of Mattie's words, she is helping herself make sense of her world.

Descriptions of Lucielia's actions and feelings further illustrate how she plays the role of a child seeking acceptance in her relationship with Eugene. As if she were a child receiving a

gift, Lucielia accepts a "pink Easter bunny" as an apology from Eugene, without demanding an explanation for his actions (91). She blames herself for becoming pregnant and has an abortion because Eugene feels that another child will make him "never have nothin" (95). Not angry with Eugene for leaving her, even after the abortion, Lucielia feels as if she were "buried in the [suit] case under the ... pile of clothes" (99) Eugene packs for his exit to Maine. By not talking to Mattie about her relationship with Eugene, Lucielia forfeits opportunities to come to an understanding of the "unstated meaning" of her actions and feelings.

The physical descriptions and the portrayal of the women's actions substantiate the motherline relationship between Lucielia and Mattie. Whenever Naylor depicts the two women together, the image is that of mother and daughter. An older, mature woman, Mattie stands beside Lucielia, who is described as having a "girl's spine," a "girl's mouth," and "young breasts." The extent of Mattie's maternal love and protectiveness for the younger woman is clearly seen when Mattie, realizing that Lucielia is about to let go of life after her daughter's death, takes charge: "Like a black Brahman cow, desperate to protect her young, she surged into the room, pushing the neighbor woman and the others out of her way."

By rocking Lucielia in her arms, Mattie takes Lucielia "back into the womb" (103) to create a new birth for her. To accomplish this, she universalizes the deaths of children, the grief of mothers by taking Lucielia on an historical tour of mothers and daughters, from ancient Greece to modern times, who have been killed and torn apart by ignorance and hate:

> Mattie rocked her out of that bed, out of that room, into a blue vastness just underneath the sun and above time. She rocked her over Aegean seas so clear they shone like crystal, so clear the fresh blood of sacrificed babies torn from their mother's arms and given to Neptune could be seen like pink froth on the water. She rocked her on and on, past Dachau, where soul-gutted Jewish mothers swept their children's entrails off laboratory floors. They flew past the spilled brains of Senegalese infants whose mothers had dashed them on the wooden sides of slave ships. And she rocked on (103).

Mattie's rocking heals as it educates. It takes Lucielia to the source of her pain: "they found it--a slight sliver of a splinter, embedded just below the surface of the skin" (104). Together they can do what one of them could not do alone, remove the pain: "the splinter gave way, but its roots were deep, gigantic, ragged, and they tore up flesh with bits of fat and muscle tissue clinging to them. They left a huge hole which was already starting to pus over, but Mattie was satisfied. It would heal" (104). As a representative of African American women and all women's culture/history, Mattie allows Lucielia to examine her life "in relation to the historical forces that have shaped the migrations of her race [and gender] the struggles of her community, and the relationships that have developed within her family" (Willis 3).

After this transformative rocking, Mattie bathes Lucielia and puts her to bed. These final maternal actions baptize Lucielia and give her a clear view of her static role in her fantasy life. Released from her restrictive role as a child, Lucielia is named "woman" (104) by the narrator of the story.

In "Lucielia Louise Turner," a woman's life is almost destroyed because she believes that she cannot survive the burden of truth. However, through a motherline, from the wisdom passed on by a life-experienced woman, she learns that truth is worth far more than self-delusion. At the end of the story, Mattie is what she always was--an African American woman whose words and actions are grounded in reality. And Lucielia has moved from being a "girl" living in a fantasy world to a world-wise, African American woman living in the real world.

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CALL FOR PAPERS for the third issue of *WILLA*, the journal of the NCTE Women in Literature and Life Assembly: The editors encourage varied perspectives, formats, and voices. Contributions should focus on the status and the image of women. Contributions might include critical essays, teaching strategies for all levels, bibliographies, personal essays, and other creative works. Each should be no more than twelve double-spaced, typed pages. Three copies of the submissions should be sent. Include word count and a self-addressed envelope to which stamps are clipped. Please use MLA style. Author's name and institutional affiliation should not appear on the manuscript. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged promptly if a self-addressed, stamped card or envelope is included. Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is April 30, 1994. Mail to: *WILLA*, Jo Gillikin, Editor, 380 Riverside Drive, 37, New York, New York 10025

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From the Editors

It is our pleasure to invite you to read the second issue of *WILLA*. The overwhelming majority of responses to the first issue were positive, and it is tempting to use this column to catalog compliments. We were, however, not without critics; and we recognize that discord, disagreement, dissonance are often part of the discourse of change.

One reader wrote: "Please alter the masthead to represent the public school teachers of America who need your assistance in establishing better curricula and more appropriate classroom procedures. Don't fall into the trap of worshipping at the steps of academe, where fad teaching seems to arise, i.e. whole language or nothing and the other rigid trends."

WILLA wishes to present choices, not dicta. We are committed to inclusivity as an actuality, not just as theory. This inclusivity is growing. In this issue, we have poetry and prose written by K-12 teachers. There is multi-level representation in peer readers and officers of *WILLA*. Once again, the section editors issue a call for dialogue, dialogue that is inclusive of pre-K through post-college levels. We, too, take this opportunity to solicit additional input from any area of teaching, inside or outside education.

Putting out the journal, even subsequent issues, is not an end in and of itself. *WILLA* exists to hear female voices whether they be women's writings published long ago and never heard from or whatever there is in writing and reading and speaking that in the grammar of life causes females to be conjunctions and prepositions and not subjects and verbs. When prospective teachers finish their educational training and still cannot name five women writers (and scarcely three) it is time to take more intentional action, perhaps issue some demands, such as insisting that half of the assigned reading be by and about females, that **half** of all administrative positions be held by women. These "**half**" measures seem extreme, but would they not better reflect the constitution of who is in the classroom, of who is in the country?

Nothing is more difficult than to bring about positive, transformative change, especially when, as Judith Stitzel's analogy creatively demonstrates, we have had to begin building the house of educational equity before finalizing the blueprints. We started with those things we thought most important, e.g., the sexism inherent in our language, omission of women in texts, the hiring of more women faculty, the placement of more women at top levels. And though we have accomplished quite a bit in these areas, let us not forget that those efforts have to be maintained as vigilantly as we see to it that children learn their ABC's and multiplication tables. The fact that we have learned how sexism restricts human potential does not mean that subsequent generations have learned it. Nor does it mean that we have found the ways to eliminate it.

In order for females to contribute to literature and life, they have to be subjects and verbs, not only the connecting and relating parts of the sentence. To see one of the reasons why we have not come to full articulation, read Maria Bruno's essay on what happens when a woman applies for a job at one of the most prestigious universities (called Norman Mailer University for all of the obvious reasons). Women in public education have modified overt sexist education in many ways, but have they the power to bring about key changes on behalf of not only women but all humanity? Does looking at the way major authors (see Ellis on Hawthorne and White on Eliot) create female characters help us find a corrective or do the stereotypes remain (read the "Cinderella" poems)? Bagnall's poem "Winning" and Feola's autobiographical essay on an Italian-American woman's education show how much we gain by claiming the personal voice as well as the scholarly voice in our publications.

We are also privileged to present an interview with Ruth K. J. Cline, a former high school English teacher who has served the profession in varied capacities and who is presently Chair of the NCTE Committee on Ethics in the Profession.

For a glimpse of what happens when women do finally begin to study women writers in graduate school, read Bogdan's essay. As we take key steps forward in our education, we learn that theory is one thing and the practice of it another. Modifying theory based on experience is crucial, for it breathes life into our concepts of truth. Decker's "Grave Exquisite Birds" provides such breath.

Much of the work of the journal and the organization has taken place at our summer meetings. Summer 1993 in Montreal was equally productive, and we wish to particularly thank Lynn Butler-Kisber, Deanne Bogdan, Lynne Alvine, Silver Stanfill, and Lee Wonsettler Williams for their reading and advice. Thanks also to the advisory committee, contributing editors, sections editors, peer review committee, officers of *WILLA*, and to NCTE for immeasurable assistance in *WILLA*.

Jo Gilkerson

Joan Holman Johnson

Early Childhood and Elementary Editor
Sandra Bradford DeCosta

Each time I have entered an early childhood or primary classroom these past months, I was made instantly aware of the number of young children organizing new games. Sometimes it was the "Beauty and the Beast" game; other times it was "The Little Mermaid."

I had not previously seen either "Mermaid" or "Beauty," but their overwhelming popularity with this young group convinced me that I needed to borrow the videos and assess content and contribution. I had to promise my friend's children a quick return because these were most prized videos.

Interestingly, all the "chorus line" females in "Mermaid" wear the same revealing costume; and they are thin, curvaceous, well endowed, and had long, wavy hair. They are sweet, gentle, kind, inquisitive, and trusting. In contrast, the evil woman, Ursula, is fat, lewd, heavily painted, and frightening. Ariel falls in love with Eric, and we know it's real love because she moans, daydreams, sings, and primps.

Furthermore, we hear that men prefer voiceless women, those who don't gossip. After all, it's "she who holds her tongue that gets a man." Returning to the traditional rescue, Eric must kiss Ariel or she reverts back to a mermaid. They kiss and live happily ever after.

Belle, the beauty of "Beauty and the Beast," is a somewhat different character. While she, too, is beautiful, thin, shapely and has captivating dark eyes and long, dark hair, she is also a reader and a thinker. She is a young woman who has ideas, and because of her active mind, it's apparent that she doesn't "fit in" with others. Gaston is overwhelmed by her beauty and feels that one so handsome as he, deserves this beautiful woman. He tells her she could be his wife and even look forward to a daily ritual of massaging his feet! They could have 6 or 7 little boys just like Gaston himself.

Children are flocking to these films, but what messages come through to them? To learn more, I interviewed a dozen young girls to learn why they like the films. Responses were overwhelmingly the same. "These are stories about being in love and getting married." " I hope I will marry a handsome prince, too." " I want to have long hair and be beautiful." Even Belle, the reader with wonderful ideas, was revered only for her beauty, her hair--and because she was in love. None of these children saw any other message or identified more worthy characteristics.

Perhaps there is some growth and development of female film and cartoon characterizations, but the stereotypes remain evident and the exceptions almost too few to count. In contrast, the "Home Alone" movies star an adventuresome, brave, clever, young boy who is able to repeatedly outwit and outscramble a pair of bungling culprits. "Save Willie," the story of a young boy and a whale, provides us with a dedicated, risktaking, kind, and brave young boy. Strong role models for boys in both instances. But where are the bright, industrious, brave, thinking young girls so desperately needed and so consistently neglected in film?

Secondary Editor
Barbara A. Schaffner

In the first issue of *WILLA*, Pat Bloodgood called for teachers with a growing interest in women's issues to join our Women in Literature and Life Assembly (*WILLA*). At our membership booth in Louisville, Kentucky, in November, 1992, we were pleased to register a large number of new members, especially secondary school teachers.

Too often when we speak about women in life, we overlook the young women from ninth to twelfth grade, who experience abusive boyfriends, overly affectionate instructors, date rape, and other problems just as do their older counterparts. Perhaps these young women are all the more vulnerable because they see themselves as students rather than adults. Consequently, there is a need for all of us, particularly educators, to be aware and to make young women aware that they are not alone with these problems.

As we sat at the booth in Louisville and talked with new members and interested questioners, person after person expressed happiness and approval of *WILLA* and its efforts in women's issues. The requests for our guide to a gender-based curriculum were numerous, and our rolls increased by more than a hundred new members. Now we encourage you to send us topics and ideas for programs for young women which might be developed into NCTE presentations or workshops for teachers to help all women deal with the problems and issues of living in today's world.

We look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh in 1993.

College Editor
Nancy Huse

Teaching Women's Studies courses has affected my ability to make the usual distinctions between my status as a woman in the profession, the discourses shaping my life in the college classroom, and the students and colleagues I encounter. Somehow all of these--work, language, people--are interlayered, intertwined, webbed. In response to the "theory--practice" issues I heard in at NCTE in Louisville (1992)--should every paper be comprehensible to every potential *WILLA* member?--what will we do to help students?--I find resonance in the ongoing moves to create feminist theory outlined in Allison Jagger's and Paula Rothenburg's *Feminist Frameworks*, third edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 1993). Subtitled "Alternative Theoretical accounts of the Relations between Women and Men," this staple of advanced courses suggests the rapid change and dialogue among feminists.

Voicing the discomfort of some feminists with postmodern work written in ways that seem to obscure the daily struggles of women, Jagger and Roghthenburg acknowledge that "theory itself has now become problematized" even though the task of understanding women's history and condition demands the generalizing processes of theory. Drawing on the work of women of color as central to understanding culture and tracing the ways feminism has become a world-wide struggle, the book gives the necessary range of voices without becoming incoherent. With *WILLA* on my mind as I read, I find Marilyn Frye's words inspiring. She says feminists are "pattern perceivers" who depend on communication among "the greates possible range of perceivers, of theorizers" (110). We are writing *The World, According to Women*, and anthology unified only by "successively overlapping threads held together by friction, not riveted by logic" (111).

Reading Jagger and Rothenburg makes me optimistic about *WILLA* even when I recognize the built-in frictions inherent in the task of perceiving patterns, misperceiving patterns, and wanting to change patterns. No wonder *WILLA* flexes professional muscles even as its members tell different stories, undertake different projects, move in

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The House That Jack and Jane Rebuilt: Why Patching the Foundation Won't Support the Structure

by Judith Stitzel

In the fall 1992, I was asked by Alden Waitt, Acting Director of Women's Studies at Ohio University, to give the keynote speech at a luncheon to welcome new faculty to the women's studies community in Athens and to offer reflections on the curriculum transformation movement in women's studies.

I had only recently begun a long thought-about and yearned-for year's leave of absence, during which I wanted, more than anything else, to make decisions about how to use my time in response to internal, not external, stimuli.

Yet, although I had been practicing saying "no" since my leave had begun three months earlier, when I thought about Alden's invitation, I realized I had been presented with an ideal opportunity to address some totally unexpected transformations in my own personal "curriculum." Responses on the day of the presentation and afterwards have assured me that because I took a personal, narrative approach, a wider range of people than might have been expected heard what I was saying and were able to connect it to how they go about integrating new material in their own lives and work. That pleased me and made me want to share the narrative with others. What follows is a slightly revised version of that presentation.

I began teaching at a university in 1962, i.e., 30 years ago, a year before the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, on the eve of the current phase of the American women's movement. I have realized frequently since then that my undergraduate education at a woman's high school and a woman's college had given me important advantages from which I am still benefitting, particularly the experience of learning and working with other women, the opportunity of seeing strong women in a wide variety of roles, and the pleasure and exhilaration of the company of smart women.

But in the 50's and 60's, at Hunter College High School and Barnard College, the curriculum was as male-centered and as Euro-centered, as any other and prepared me to succeed in similarly configured graduate programs in English literature at the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota. My doctoral dissertation "Henry Fielding and the Serious Moralist: The Sexual Ethic in Tom Jones," despite its title, showed little promise of the feminist critiques which I would soon come to admire.

And it is important for me to remember that when I did begin to get involved in women's studies in 1968, it was more in response to my students' challenges--sometimes very angry--to what I was and was not teaching them than in response to my own needs, either intellectual or emotional. I was, as I look back on those times--and probably still am today as I look at myself honestly--a moderate rather than a radical person, both temperamentally and politically. That self-description might surprise some of those I have worked with, especially within the university; and as you would expect of someone who has led a women's studies program in a patriarchal institution, I have often rocked, sometimes even tipped, the boat.

Yet, in those early years, since I was being asked to question the worth of what I had so recently and painstakingly learned in graduate school even before I had had a chance to use it, I think my own relative privilege might have insulated me from the emerging feminist critiques of my discipline, had it not been for my respect for my students' passion, my joy in teaching, my fascination with the process of learning, and my faith in the capacity of people to participate in and take responsibility for their own education.

That faith included the eagerness to learn from students and colleagues alike. And learn I did, from the students not much younger than I who were struggling with decisions about the Vietnam War and who were losing friends to that war, and from women--younger, my age, and older--at my university and around the country who were beginning to hear themselves and one another and to hold the academy accountable as an institution which could either perpetuate blatant social and political inequities or forge the tools to dismantle the interlocking blocks of oppression.

By 1973, in large part because of my students and the increasingly articulate and organized women's movement, I became involved in creating the earliest women's studies courses at West Virginia University; in 1980, after years of energetic lobbying and organizing on the campus, the first women's studies program began with me as its half-time coordinator; and, in 1984, I became the first director of the West Virginia University Center for Women's Studies which I helped to create.

> *Like any story, it may take you to places and interpretations that the author didn't intend.*

Since 1980, I have shared struggles and triumphs with the thousands of others involved in women's studies around the country. Currently, I am on a year's leave from the Center for Women's Studies, having learned from my feminist work to pay attention to my own voice--which in this case started saying over two years ago, in several verbal and nonverbal languages--you need a chance to relax and to reflect.

And as I have been doing so, I realize how abiding, intense, and overarching has been my interest in what we now call feminist pedagogy, including the unsettling and challenging nudges which women's studies feminist scholarship has given to our earlier paradigms, not only of knowledge, but of knowing, teaching, and learning. Like the Copernican, the Darwinian, and the Einsteinian revolutions which preceded it, feminism is a philosophical revolution, and more specifically a rev-

olution in epistemology; and at the end of the century, perhaps even more than in the 1960's, we ignore at great peril the opportunity to rethink the place of the knower in relationship to what she or he knows. Whether the field is literature or psychology or political science or sociology or public administration or history or the arts or the sciences--we are frequently being asked and asking others to question how long and whether the foundation upon which we stand can continue to support us. Was the Renaissance such a good time for women? Are there only two sexes? What if Freud's patients were telling the truth about the incest they experienced and he presented as fantasy?

Some of us find these questions exhilarating, some find them frightening. Some find them both. I want to think about them by telling you a story, a "true" story, as they say, and telling it in enough detail for you to be able to enjoy it for itself and to see where it connects (and doesn't connect) with your own experiences in the academy and personally. Like any story, it may take you to places and interpretations that the author didn't intend.

Once upon a time, my husband and I lived in a house we assumed would last us, more or less as it was, for our lifetime. There would be the usual repairs, of course. But we would be spared anything extensive. As the expression now goes, "Not." In fact, for the past month--it feels like years--we have been dealing with invasive, major reconstruction. I mean major, whether measured by how many people and pieces of equipment are in and around our house and yard, by how much noise we have to cope with (from jackhammers and backhoes), by how much money we will have to part with, or by how much anxiety we are feeling, expressing, and repressing.

Even now, we don't understand exactly what happened or what we might have done to have prevented it; although friends, neighbors, contractors, and insurance agents are generous with their insights and hindsight. What we had thought was an annoying inconvenience--an occasional rivulet of water across the floor of an unfinished basement, and only when it rained very hard--was apparently only the visible manifestation of much more basic problems, both below and above ground.

We would not have discovered the seriousness of the situation even when we did had we not had a much less serious and unrelated problem, an occasional leak from a shower into the family room below it. Since whenever we had a worker in the house for any reason I would take the opportunity of asking that he (and they were all he's) take a look in the basement to see if he had any idea what we might do about the water that occasionally came in, I did so this time as well.

Because this particular worker, Virgil, who was to become my guide through the underworld in the next few weeks, was a mason and a carpenter as well as a plumber--an interdisciplinary person, if you will--because it was raining very hard this particular day, because when he reached up, his hand went through a beam, allowing him to see water gushing into the house; I thought that maybe this time we had hit pay dirt. And when, after going outside and checking, Virgil predicted that if we reshingled the roof with special attention to the flashing, we would have our problem licked, this seemed to be a very timely solution, since the roof was almost twenty years old. I was grateful to Virgil.

But sadly, the mislaid flashing and aging roof were only the beginning. Removing a trial piece of aluminum siding revealed rotted wood; removing a concrete patio revealed a bowed cinder block wall. Gravel had never been placed around the footers; drains had never been laid. The earth had been pressing and the water had been seeping against our house, the water freezing and thawing and freezing, cracking the block. In fact, the very foundation of our home had been severely damaged. And gratitude threatened to change to resentment. And wanting to disbelieve, our desire to blame the messenger became very strong indeed. Who were these people telling us that the foundation would not hold? What was the source of their authority? Or, in one of the less polite voices singing in our heads, "What the hell did they know?"

Oh, you can be sure that as evidence of the extent of our problem accumulated we got a second opinion, and a third, and a fourth. But even as we pushed forward with what we were beginning to sense was inevitable, we continued to put up considerable resistance to each new diagnosis, creatively embellishing the various mechanisms of denial.

From the beginning, the saving grace for me was that I was curious. Because taking an academic approach provided the comfort of the familiar during a very disorienting time and because pedagogy and processes of learning fascinate me, I found I could bring some order into my life by taking what was happening as a model for understanding how, personally and professionally, we resist other incontrovertible evidence that the center will not hold, such as the evidence that women's studies scholarship so often offers the traditional disciplines. I began to analyze how my husband and I, intelligent and responsible people both, had been able for so long to deny the obvious. What had made that possible?

I have to admit that before this time, I had neither known nor cared much about how my house was put together. My husband knew more, but it wasn't a subject we talked much about. We both adored the house which had some lovely features, including wide-paneled knotty pine wood throughout the downstairs, a spiral staircase, two skylights and, when we bought it in May 1970 for $37,000, an apple tree in full bloom with a tree house for our son. Our in-laws who loaned us the money which allowed us to assume the mortgage did ask us about something as unromantic as electrical wiring, and we begrudgingly checked it out. But we went very little

beyond that and accepted the seller's forthright admission that there was always some water in the unfinished basement when it rained very hard as a necessary flaw in an otherwise perfect universe. We did not ask about gravel or about drains.

Even when, five years ago, our next door neighbor had the cinder block replaced on the front of her house, we commiserated without making any connection to our own situation. And if her sons who did the work said anything to us about what had happened to their house, which was built around the same time as ours, I don't remember. The fact is that we only began to be curious about and to appreciate the deep structure of our house when its integrity was threatened. Before that, even when all wasn't completely well, we were able to find explanations of, if not solutions for, our problems which did not involve a major reorientation of our thinking. We could let tell-tale signs go without analyzing their causes; we could cover and recover peeling blocks with new waterproofing paint--because we didn't care enough about the room to begin with. After all, it was just an unfinished basement.

Only hours later did it occur to me that until the siding was off, Bob would not have had the opportunity, no, the shock, of coming into his study, moving away the record cabinet, and seeing light pour in. Things simply hadn't gotten bad enough for him to change his paradigm.

In some embarrassingly primitive way, what wasn't happening directly to us, didn't interest us. Clearly, it was easy to conceptualize a problem as superficial rather than as systemic when we thought we were basically on top of things and when we were too busy to take the time to think beyond stopgap solutions. When I think about how we avoided our connection to our neighbor's problem, I can better understand how colleagues might easily see how a feminist critique can reveal the flawed methods and theories of someone else's discipline without seeing (or acknowledging) what such a critique might reveal in their own.

Clearly, the temptations and tricks of denial are legion.

One day Virgil called me outside to show me that now that he had taken the aluminum siding off to assess the damage to the wood--it was considerable where the water, unable to drain through the clay soil, had backed up through the cinder block--there was a hole through which he could see directly into my husband's study. When I told Bob, assuming he would be appalled, he told me that he had, in fact, known about it for a number of years and was pretty sure he had mentioned it to me. Didn't I remember that he thought a fieldmouse had eased in somehow and chomped away on the wood? I couldn't say that I did. But he reminded me that he had put some poison outside the house, had checked the hole periodically, and when it had gotten no bigger, had assumed he had found and stopped the problem.

I was amazed at first that someone as methodical as Bob could have ignored something so blatantly wrong as a hole in the wall of the study that he loved. Only hours later did it occur to me that, until the siding was off, Bob would not have had the opportunity, no, the shock, of coming into his study, moving away the record cabinet, and seeing light pour in. Things simply hadn't gotten bad enough for him to change his paradigm. It takes the pressure of that one-fact-too-many before things fall into place or before the whole edifice begins to collapse, depending on your point of view.

Even though the reorientation, once accepted, makes sense of a myriad of individual anomalies, we resist. And the longer we resisted, the more reason there was to resist even longer. Like a scholar who had already put a lot of time and energy into a paradigm fundamentally flawed because of its ignorance of women and gender, or race, or class, we had already invested an enormous amount of ourselves in this house and its surroundings. We were especially proud of our perennial garden and our stone walks and paths, which we had put in at great expense only a few years previously. Nonetheless, most of it had to go. I will not lie to you. It broke our hearts. And even though our landscaper, trying to be kind, reminded us that we would now have the opportunity to start from scratch and to replace some dying trees that we hadn't had the heart to say good-bye to before, the heartbreak lasts. In fact, the emotional assault has been considerable.

There is the disruption to one's daily life. The dependence on other people's timetables. On the weather. The incremental assault on one's sense of confidence and security. The need to become quickly knowledgeable in areas in which one feels uncomfortable. All those people intruding on one's property. Talk about boundaries! First we couldn't use our front door, then our side door was off limits. Then we could no longer go through the garage, which had served for a while. "I really miss the garage," my sister-in-law who was staying with us said plaintively one morning, causing us to burst out in laughter at how humble our desires had become.

Moods followed each other quickly and unpredictably. Anger. Sadness. Acceptance. Giddiness. Curiosity. Hope. I alternated between annoyance and satisfaction as I was told about and shown the mistakes that had been made by builders of old, either because they didn't know better or had been too much in a hurry;

mistakes of which, we were to assume, the present builders would never be guilty. How could the earlier builders have done something so stupid? so careless? so sloppy? so irresponsible? It was, in fact, important to resist the temptations of either/or thinking which proved to be no more valuable or viable here than they are in other areas of thought. There is a very strong temptation to explain what is going wrong in the present in terms of what someone else could have done differently in the past, and blame is certainly understandable as an emotional outlet; but as a form of meaning making, it mires us in the past.

And while we never fully overcame our emotional resistance to what was happening, the tendency to deny was finally counterbalanced by the desire to know and to do the best we could to guarantee the future integrity of our house. For the backward-looking question, "How did we/could we let it get so bad?" we substituted the forward-looking one, "What can we do now?" We learned that before the workmen could take out the crumbling cinder block, they had to support the house with temporary pillars and beams. Otherwise, it would collapse before it could be repaired. Realizing this need for temporary support, I thought hard about our responsibility to each other to offer at least the same support as we struggle honestly with the stresses and challenges that curricular transformations such as women's studies can bring.

Sometimes we even have to offer this support to ourselves, as we follow where our new thoughts will take us. Let me give you an example. I was enjoying thinking about how well I was getting along with all the workmen who had become part of my world, Virgil, Ronnie, Lee, Mike and Mike, Monty, Louis, Brian. It was getting so that I could ask and tell them things with ease. I looked forward to seeing them in the morning. I thought about them when they weren't there. I liked them and liked being liked by them. My husband, who was happy to rely on my having the major dealings with them, was appreciative of my skills.

One day, my pleasure was complicated by my asking myself whether I might feel differently if all or some of these workpeople were women? Was there anything in my behavior toward them which was structured in terms of our gender difference, of our expectations about interactions between men and women, especially as these teractions were further shaped by expectations governed by class? Was I, for instance, counting on their being surprised at how knowledgeable this "little woman" was making herself about a field she wasn't supposed to worry her "little head" about? Was I flirting with them? Would I have trusted women even more? Or less? Would I have spent more or less time with them? Felt more or less involved in the process? For a short while, a slight embarrassment kept me from sharing these concerns with anyone, but I was rewarded for doing so, as we almost always are.

According to a good friend Maggie, two of her friends, Lynn and John, who had recently finished building a house on the Oregon coast, had taken the same gendered approaches as Bob and I had. In fact, Maggie said that Lynn had been doing quite a bit of thinking, reading, and writing about the whole issue, She had discovered that there seems to be a heterosexual imperative in getting help in major repairs, i.e., there should be a man around, at least in the background; and also that within that structure, a woman would have better luck getting information to and from the workmen. A man asking the same basic level questions as a woman might be considered stupid; if he asked more technical questions, he might be thought to be interfering.

As if sensing the latter, Lynn's husband, like mine, seemed much more willing than she to assume that if something looked peculiar, it was probably because it wasn't yet finished rather than because something was the matter, and he was much less willing than she was to check this assumption out. Lynn and I felt that it was better to ask the questions than have something done or ignored which would be difficult to remedy later. Not so our husbands, who did not necessarily trust the workmen more than we, but couldn't find a way to question them which would not simultaneously seem to question their authority.

During some periods in history, I suppose it must have felt safe and responsible not to question authority and to build on intellectual foundations which others have built. But this is not one of them. Most of us here know this. And many of you may not even feel the kinds of resistances to change that I have been alluding to through my tale. You may have recognized quite early in your lives and careers that the foundation was rotten and easily embraced the changed perspectives provided by women's studies, grateful for how much they can reveal. But others--administrators, faculty, and students alike--resist the shift in focus, both consciously and unconsciously. And many of us both embrace and resist. It is to this latter group in particular that I hope this tale and commentary have been suggestive.

My husband and I discovered that moving from the unthought-about to the unthinkable to the inevitable, while it can take a toll in self confidence, doesn't need to. I am not naive. I am well aware that I am privileged, that very special conditions made it possible for me to learn from my otherwise difficult situation. I had money. I had the time. I had the cooperation of my partner. I had access to information. Many people in a similar predicament would not have had the similar privileges.

To return to our analogy, I believe that, thanks to women's studies, comparable privileges are available to us in the academy, i.e., time, the opportunity to focus our attention; the permission, even the mandate, to ask questions, including rude questions; and access to a wide range of information. When accurate information really matters, when your house, or your life, or the life of our planet depend upon it, a narrow definition of experts and

expertise can be dangerous. Many of our neighbors, we discovered, had information which might have been useful to us earlier, had not subtle rules of privacy kept them from sharing it. Such rules can divide us in the academy as well. But they don't have to.

And whether it's the major reconstruction of a discipline or of a home, reaching out beyond sanctioned boundaries is often the best way to go. I admit that it can feel risky. Suddenly reminded of what they might be neglecting in their own homes, some friends we talked to wondered whether we really needed to be taking such drastic measures in ours. Mightn't we have overreacted? Was the extraordinary expense worth it? Did the repairs need to be so expensive?

And, of course, those of us in women's studies know the answer is yes; the repairs did/do have to be this extensive to guarantee the future integrity of our shared home.

JUDITH GOLD STITZEL is a Professor of English and Women's Studies at West Virginia University, where, until last year, she was the director of the Center for Women's Studies (1980-1993). She has published short fiction, as well as articles on Doris Lessing, feminist pedagogy and women's studies administration in Colorado Quarterly; College English; Frontiers, A Journal of Women Studies, Feminist Teacher, and *Women's Studies International Forum.*

Winning

"Don't let him outgrow you,"
They warned me in the '50's,
When I put you through school.
"Keep up," they said,
"Or you'll be dull,
With only children for company.
Then he'll leave."
I heeded the advice.

I kept the children quiet
While you took tough courses,
Typed your papers, sympathized
When you took your Orals,
And put all our lives on hold
While you finished your Ph.D.

At last, with the children in school,
I got to go to college, too.
No one warned me
About my own growth.

I passed my courses
While I managed Girl Scout cookie sales,
Composed papers
While I held a sick child,
Studied for Orals
While I entertained your mother,
And finished my Ph.D.
Wile struggling against
Your dying interest.

Then you said, "Goodbye.
You're not the person I married."
Well, hell no!
But you
Didn't outgrow me!

by Norma Hayes Bagnall

NORMA HAYES BAGNALL began college at age 39 and her teaching career at age 50. She is Professor in the Department of English at Missouri Western State College and is past president of the Children's Literature Association.

Grave Exquisite Birds

If I had worn a gown into your death,
blue birds would have lifted its corners,
to recommend a village in the Netherlands,
with a grave unearthed,
ready for an ebony master,
an exquisite prince.

My gown would have gold stars printed
with bird claws holding the length
so I wouldn't drag the village to ruins
and cover whole graves
where masters of words
once had exquisite meaning.

The gown would turn black in the night.
Birds would fly me to the line of death
just outside the village.
I would meet your grave
and call you master like I never have.
I'd wait for your exquisite voice to soothe

My gown from blowing in the wind.
The beating of the bird's feathers:
an indecent gesture to the village of my heart
has opened its grave beating.
The master of my mind
bears exquisite yellow crosses to my eyes.

I am trapped in the wisdom of my gown.
Wings of a bird could lengthen my
arms to beat over the village
where your grave exists;
I could master flight
and be as exquisite as you in air.

My gown falls from my shoulders.
Blue birds beckon my body
into the soft village earth.
A naked grave wind beats.
I master the art of standing still.
An exquisite platform of sand blows my sight away.

Crisp gown of black birds shower the village,
with grave countenance,
they master the night and exquisite moon.

by Helen Decker ©

HELEN DECKER shares her time between NYC and Woodstock. She currently teaches English at Susan E. Wagner High School.

An Interview with Ruth K. J. Cline
by Lynne Alvine

Ruth K. J. Cline earned a B.A. from St. Olaf College, Minnesota and then taught high school English in Iowa and Minnesota for ten years. After completing an M.A. in English and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Iowa, she accepted a faculty position in the College of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1966. She has presented and published widely on the topics of teacher preparation, adolescent literature, and secondary school reading development. Her own book Focus on Families *(1989) is one of the seven books now in print in the series* Teenage Perspectives *for which she serves as Series Editor. She co-authored, with William McBride,* A Guide to Literature for Young Adults *(1983). Professor Cline has been a lifelong member of NCTE, serving as Vice-President, President-Elect, President, and Past President between 1988 and 1991. In addition, she has been active in ALAN, CEE and NCATE work. She has received numerous teaching and service awards, including* WILLA's *Rewey Belle Inglis Award in 1991.*

Many young people in her English classes and many teachers of English have benefitted both directly and indirectly from her lifetime of service to the teaching of English, English education, and the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Cline is presently Chair of the NCTE Committee on Ethics in the Profession.

Q. What are the goals of the NCTE Ethics Committee?

A. One of the missions of our committee is to bring forward ethical issues in a way that makes it possible for membership to discuss them. Our whole country needs to have a lot more conversation about what is ethical and what isn't. It was time for NCTE to look at the issues and identify the questions that are embedded in them. We're also charged to get the ethical statements from other professional organizations, to examine them to see if there is any way they could be useful to English teachers. [The MLS is] looking at the ethical obligations of teachers toward their colleagues, obligations toward students, towards one another. We're still in the information gathering stage. Although we brainstormed our areas of concern at our first meeting, we haven't had a chance to get very far.

Q. Can you bring to mind some of those areas?

A. Yes. Composition is one of the areas. What obligation do teachers of writing have towards their students and toward the kind of confidential things that students might write about? Another issue is the whole business of plagiarism. The professor gets something wonderful from a student and then just uses it as if it were his or her own idea. There's the ethics of marketing what we do. What is the ethic of claims that we make to students in our classes? The course description... Is there any ethical issue involved here? Is it simply a description of what we hope to achieve or are we making some kind of a claim? There are a lot of areas of gray that will be difficult to deal with. That's why the committee is planning to use a case study approach and open the conversation to our membership.

Q. You were interviewed recently for the NCTE COUNCIL CHRONICLE. *The piece about the Ethics Committee has a sidebar that presents an ethical issue.*

A. Yes. The members of the committee are very interested in this case study approach. What Jack [Bushman] and I did on the case study we put in the *CHRONICLE* (June, 1993) was to raise some questions that we hope teachers will discuss. The ethical issue is "teaching to the contract," to the letter of the contract. In districts that are cutting back on teachers' salaries, teachers don't want to penalize students by having a strike. So, what they are doing is teaching to the letter of the contract. If it is something that is not specified in the contract, they're not doing it. For instance, students have been asking for letters of recommendation. These teachers are saying, "We're sorry. We can't do that." This issue that permeates all levels could be really a hot item. Is this a less destructive way to let people know your dissatisfaction with your work conditions than it would be to have a strike? Is it less harmful to the students to do it this way? Or is it more harmful to the students?

Q. Not only in terms of time lost, but in terms of modeling what it is to be a profession...?

A. You've got all of that. And yet, teachers get dumped on so much and we always stand up through all of this junk and we say, "Oh, but we are very nurturing and we are very professional and we're going to do what we need to do anyway." You think, at what point do we say, "Hold it! This is the end." So, there are a lot of really muddy parts of this thing that we could get into, and I think that our committee is saying, "We don't want to say 'This is what you've gotta do.'" We're not going to dictate ethics, but I think we have an obligation to raise the issues, to get the people to think about them and to talk about them.

Q. One of the purposes of WILLA *is to foster exploration of issues related to women in the profession and/or girls and young women in our classrooms. How does the work of the Ethics Committee relate to that goal?*

A. In one session in Richmond, there was a discussion of ethical issues related to teachers' interactions with students--how they call on girls, what kind of response they expect. Is that an ethical issue? I think it is. I would hope that *WILLA* members would talk with one another and then with us about their concerns. I'm beginning to think of a publication that will have vignettes for discussion. We might suggest a few questions that would be appropriate for that vignette. Teacher education classes should be discussing these things. Current teachers should be talking about these things in their committee meetings and their faculty meetings. Our first efforts will be the vignettes we are putting into the *CHRONICLE*. We want people to think about them and to respond to them, to write to the *CHRONICLE* at NCTE headquarters.

Q. What are some of the other areas?

A. We have identified about 14 areas. Within each area there were a number of questions. For instance, the whole business of tracking students often separates out by race. We tend to think girls are going to be better English students and the science teachers and math teachers think that boys are better in those subjects. That's a very obvious example. The session in Richmond talked about the kind of questions you ask boys and girls--or that you don't ask them. You don't ask girls things that are challenging. I think we do need to make teachers aware of whom they are calling on and what kind of questions they're framing for them. We've had this old myth that boys will read boys' stories and girls will read boys' stories but that boys will not read girls' stories. I think we need to do more research on that. I don't think that's true anymore. Some of the new books would dispel that idea in a minute, but I don't know if there is data. I'm thinking of a good example--DOWN-RIVER by Will Hobbs, a young adult book where the protagonist is a girl, and she's wonderful. She's a strong girl, and she helps to hold the group together. I think any boy would enjoy reading that story. In his newest book which is called THE BIG WONDER, the main character is a 14-year-old boy. He sees girls, and he would really like to get to know them. When he does get to know one, she's a really strong girl and strong character. She doesn't have a big role in the story, but she is important, nevertheless. It's good. You don't have to count how many pages the strong woman appears on in the book. We need to have a better way of measuring the impact of a character.

Q. One of your concerns is the concern for the disintegration of our social fabric. Perhaps your being chair of the ethics committee comes out of that concern. What angers you? What frustrates you? What depresses you about our social structure?

A. I hate to see kids get the short end of things. I know that it can go the other way and kids can be so pampered and spoiled, but we have a lot of adults in our society who are thinking only of themselves--selfish, self-centered people who have kids and have no idea how to treat them. And that angers me. That's one of my big gripes about the "Right-to-Life" people. Right-to-life, but what kind of life? Some of those kids are born into situations that are just awful...awful...awful! This is a personal reaction, not something our committee is talking about, but I think that deep down that's one of the things that teachers need to think about. Who is their class? What are they facing? I went to Denny Taylor's presentation in Richmond. It was powerful because she's talking about the kinds of problems not just kids bring, but the problems their parents put on them. How can kids think about multiplication tables and math problems and reading stories about somebody else's life when their own life is in such disarray?

Q. Where does your interest in the ethics committee come from for you? as a woman? as an educator? as a person who has worked with schools and schooling across a few years?

A. I've thought about this a number of times. I think that one of the key influences would be my father. He was superintendent of a small school in Iowa when I remember him. My dad had been there for four years as superintendent, and then he and my mother moved to a farm a hundred miles away. Dad was going to be a farmer, but they were afraid of losing the farm in the Depression, and this community offered him the job again of being Superintendent. Mr. Lee, the District Superintendent for the Methodist Church, had told people in that community that he thought my father was such a good example for young people that they ought to hire him just to be there--even if they didn't have a job for him. I didn't know about that until I was teaching school myself, and I started thinking about why a community would feel that way. One of the things I remember very distinctly was that my father had the idea that every single child had something to offer. It wasn't that they were all wonderful students, but there was something that made them unique and it was our job as teachers to find out what that was. I do think that has influenced me as a teacher and as a person. When I meet people, I like to think what is there that makes them special, that makes them unique? I sometimes go on a real quest to figure it out.

Q. Can you identify when you might have first become aware that opportunities for young women might not be the same as opportunities for young men?

A. In my life, I've always assumed that the opportunities were the same. It was because of my father. He had four boys and me. I always knew that I could do anything. When he talked about the future, it was like... "Well, what do you want to do? You can do it." I thought everybody grew up that way. I was really surprised when I found out that wasn't the way other people looked at life and that women didn't have all those opportunities.

Q. And your mother?

A. My mother was a very strong person. She died last August at the age of 98 and 10 months. She had a remarkable life. There are a lot of people who were inspired by her, by her strength and her faith and her belief in her children. It was a real privilege to have her as a mother.

Q. She also had that perspective that women could do anything?

A. Because she did. She went to Normal School and taught. Her mother died when she was very young, and she wanted to be a teacher. I don't think many of her age mates did that. She taught and she was principal of a school, a little two-room school near Des Moines.

Q. How have others responded to your self assurance?

A. My family kind of expected me to do things, to succeed. I keep going into the world with the idea that I can. When I went to the University of Colorado, I was the only woman in the secondary division. When we first started having faculty meetings, they looked at me like, "Where's the coffee?" But they quit doing that and they got their own coffee and they brought me coffee. I think, on the whole, I expected to be treated as an equal and I think I have been. I get a little put out with women who don't expect it and then who whine. I guess I was more willing to go to somebody and say, "Why did you say that?" or "That wasn't a very nice thing to have happen." As far as NCTE is concerned, we have a predominance of women in our organization. I'm always pleased when women get elected to positions, but yet I've worked with some wonderful men who need to be heard and who need to be there. I would like to think that when I was President I expected to hear from both men and women. And I respected what they said. I think that how you are brought up has a lot to do with it. I was very fortunate, and I'm appreciative. I think that my brothers have been surprised at some of the things that I've done. I don't think my father would have been surprised.

Q. Can you identify where in your life an awareness of gender issues first emerged? I was with you at that Richmond session. I know you have that awareness....
A. I sure do, but I don't know exactly when it happened. I think that I was probably teaching at the University of Colorado when I read about gender issues in the seventies. I started being more aware of myself and the types of questions I asked the men and women in my classes. I keep reading things and learning. The recent AAUW research studies are fascinating.

Q. Say something about those and how they interest you.
A. They look at the number of men and women who are going into science, for instance. Women have been scared off for years about science and math. When I find a girl in education who is going into one of those areas, I get excited and encourage her. I taught an oral communications course at the university that was taken by all majors, elementary and secondary, where I pushed the gender issue concerns. It was an appropriate place to do that, and seemed effective.

Q. What have you read in the last 4-6 years in the YA genre that you would recommend to teachers who want students to read about characters with more appropriate sex roles?
A. I think that we need to talk about sex roles in all books. [The characters] don't have to be just wonderful role models. I think we can talk about why this wasn't a wonderful role model. What was there about this boy in the story that was negative or that made you think he was sexist.

Q. We can raise the consciousness of our students around stereotyped characters?
A. I think we all wait for the perfect book, and there's not going to be such an animal. So I think we'd better use what we have and talk about the issues as we see kids reading all books.

Q. Are there some titles that are especially good for those conversations?
A. I think any book that we read can be used that way, but I think if we find a book that has a strong female character in it, we need to call the students' attention to it. The Babysitter Club books have been knocked, but they're better than the teenage romance where [the girls] wait in the wings for some boy to notice them. At least in these stories the girls are doing things. If kids get enjoyment from them, I would rather have them read those than nothing. A teacher who sees them reading those books can start giving them other things. We can call attention to the books that we want them to read, but when they're reading things that *we* don't like, I think we need to talk with them about "How did you feel about that character?"

Q. What question do you see as being an important one for secondary and elementary teachers?
A. One is the whole business of how teachers can give support to one another and encourage one another to treat kids as they know they should be treated and not give in to the external pressures of principals or whomever.

Q. Finally, are there any other thoughts that you'd like to share with WILLA *readers?*
A. I would like to think that all women are concerned about gender issues, but that may not be the case. We constantly need to be reminded. *WILLA* can play that role through various articles and programs, and not just in our publications, but we need to work together things published in other journals and publications. And, I'd like to say something about the award *WILLA* gave me a year ago--the Rewey belle Inglis Award. I felt very honored by that because it was from colleagues in front of the CEE, the group that I feel most aligned with. I was very touched by that and I appreciate it.

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Some Observations about Hawthorne's Women
by Barbara Ellis

At the start of the 19th century, Sir Walter Scott, the best-selling author of the historical potboiler (114,000 books sold in France alone during his lifetime[1]) may have changed the role of women characters forever in this country when he created Jeanie Deans. This heroine of his vastly successful *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) played none of the stereotypic roles assigned women: Magdalene/Eve, madonna, wife of Bath, drudge, vampire. She was an Innocent who did murder.

Scott did not seize the opportunity to employ the usual slant on Eve, Motherhood, or the Sixth Commandment. Instead, he documented what happened to a woman who committed infanticide because she was ground down by the powers of economics, society, and institutionalized religion. When an author made a murderer his principal character and evoked sympathy for her, even spurred humane laws for women caught in such binds--*and still earned significant royalties*--editors *and* writers paid attention. Perhaps a woman *could* play a principal role instead of being part of the scenery or a victim of a benighted Poe hero, walled up, hacked up, or dug up. In America, only Hawthorne dared such a mission and on an equally towering theme: that man's fear of women keeps him forever lonely and is the chief bar to a harmonious hearthside. But what editor or publisher thought this theme was saleable? Practicality, therefore, dictated that Hawthorne dress the message in allegory. Better a cryptic message than none at all.

Hawthorne read Scott avidly--as well as Rousseau's revolutionary ideas about equality at *all* levels. He never viewed women as unimportant or as threatening Eves, but, rather, as men's vital emotional, intellectual, and spiritual cohorts. He grew up with two sisters and a widowed mother, married an intellectual and emotional peer, and fathered two outspoken daughters. Women were companions, not threats.[2]

He may have concluded that it was testosterone and perceived threats to the testes, and not Eve, that from antiquity had blocked the kind of deep, soul-to-soul relationship he came to hallow. Battering and, particularly, child molestation may never have been mentioned in his day, but they are scarcely new phenomena in human life; they are the byproducts of ancient attitudes about Eve, contempt for women, or natural urges gone haywire.

How to ameliorate such views and deeds, how to overcome deep-rooted fears of women, and yet carry these messages in the literature of the day was/is a monumental challenge. Hawthorne's subliminal pleas seem always to go over men's heads; and if they are scholarly types, scathing denigration of such a hypothesis may boil down from Olympus--anger revealing fear of its probability. Why else do some colleagues see more tragedy in, say, Arthur Dimmesdale than Hester Prynne? Only in stories like "The Gentle Boy" did Hawthorne risk showing, through tragedy, the magnificent benefits of love and compassion when men put aside their great fear: loss of power. Alas, he had to use a child, not a woman, to carry that message.

Despite women's equal roles in founding this country, authors of the era ignored that fact. Interestingly, almost no Hawthorne scholar except Roy Male seems to have noted the paucity of women as major characters in early American literature despite their known value in settling this country. Male writes:

> In this predominantly masculine enterprise [writing], the role of women has always been anomalous. The notorious ineptitude of the heroine in Western films serves as a constant reminder that in a world of movement in space, a woman was simply an encumbrance. Her alternatives were to remain behind in the ancestral covered wagon and the squatter's hut. Without density and...flamboyant marksmanship of Hurricane in the dime novels. Before *The Scarlet Letter* no American writer understood the values of time, tragedy, or womanhood well enough to create a woman in fiction.[3]

Then came the best-selling Scott to belie that echolaliac myth with the lowborn heroine, Jeanie Deans, who kills her newborn. Hawthorne took notice that such a risky theme sold books and drew attention to harsh laws about unwed mothers. It is the Salem witch trials that may have served as a springboard by which Hawthorne launched his first tale, "The Hollow of the Three Hills," in 1835. Witches not only packed courtrooms, but theaters, as box-office receipts attest with *Macbeth*. Their supposed deeds and hideous deaths had been dramatic material for centuries. His ancestor, a judge at the Salem trials, certainly was the recipient of many terrifying exit lines from women ("God will give you blood to drink"[4]).

Hawthorne probably would have agreed with Virginia Woolf who firmly believed such women were hanged or set ablaze not for religious error, but because they threatened men's need to control--and also might have property to confiscate. As Woolf points out:

> Any woman born with a great gift in the 16th century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty.[5]

Such men's dilemma was, of course, that they could not keep pronouncing independent women as witches. Hawthorne obviously spent time trying to fathom why his ancestor and others were maniacal in deal-

ing with women who were regarded as defiant or, worse, who used Delilah's traditional "wiles" to overpower a society's most powerful men.

Psychiatrists such as Dr. Melanie Klein believe man's behavior stems from perceptions that women are the real holders of the sceptor because they "control" life itself. Overlooking the fact that life must have a seed, myopic men have focused only on the woman's role in conception, childbirth, and--amazingly--the key decision on when and *if* a child is going to be nourished (physically or emotionally). Klein noted that when infants realize they have no control over warmth and food offered at the breast, rage begins against women; as they grow, outrage turns inward to fantasies about destruction or defilement (or worship) of the breast or womb; some of serial killer Ted Bundy's deeds involved horrific mutilations of the breast; and Indian victims of a Minnesota serial killer, had vaginas sundered with tree branches. Edgar Allen Poe's "Berenice" has a grisly ending underscoring his and other men's fears about a Delilah's potential to harm genitalia.[6]

Small wonder then, in life and American fiction, that women are either stripped of power by trivialization, brutalizations such as rape, or portrayed as destroyers, poisonous *femmes fatales*. Eves (or Miss Sadie Thompson). That concept does not square with the reality of county social service agencies now registering three cases per month of sexual assaults upon girls under age five (not counting the thousands too frightened to even report such a deed).[7] Or, adjunctive to that, that thousands upon thousands of emboldened Beatrice Cencis now are trooping into counselors and exiting in tears or murderous fury after learning that when they were tots, their mouths were used as receptacles for testosterone's mighty urge. One Louisiana counselor estimated that such "Eves" and "defilers" constitute an enormous percentage of her clientele, indicating that such acts are yet another ancient device to destroy women's power. Forgotten is Hawthorne's subliminal theme that both reproductive systems are *equally* vital to life; one is not less important than the other; such power is to be equally shared by companions at his symbolic warm hearth.[8]

Richard Brenzo is one of the few scholars courageous enough to stress this issue in his commentary about "Rappaccini's Daughter," one of Hawthorne's most confrontive stories concerning the consequences of the man-woman dilemma. He astutely sees Beatrice as an Eve still trapped and controlled by three males. Then it was God, Adam, and the Serpent. In Hawthorne, it is Giovanni, Baglioni, and her own father.

> Each man represents a typical male role might find a woman threatening, and might therefore try to destroy her. Giovanni, her lover and almost-husband, desires her sexuality, yet fears its power to dominate and destroy him. Baglioni, her professional rival, feeling insecure about his university position, tries to neutralize her by diverting her energies to woman's proper sphere, marriage. Her father wants her beautiful enough to win a husband, dependent enough to remain in his home, obedient enough to do his bidding, and compliant enough to be molded to his standards. None of these men could have been portrayed as feeling these same fears, with the same intensity, about a man. Notice, for example, that Baglioni views his struggle with Rappacini almost as a game, with a rather gentlemanly tone. Only with Beatrice does he play for keeps.[9]

No wonder Hawthorne suggested the human race start over in "The New Adam and Eve."

A content analysis of Hawthorne's women in six of his most famous tales demonstrates how he uses them as vehicles of warning about the results of men's fears. My study examines "The Hollow of the Three Hills," "Young Goodman Brown," "Roger Malvin's Burial," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Birthmark," and "Rappacini's Daughter."

When a contributor with no writing credentials turned up at *The Salem Gazette* in 1835 with a story featuring two women as the principals, the editor presumably gave more intensive scrutiny to this submission than the offerings of "regulars" or those lifted from exchange newspapers. What must have caught the editor's attention was that Hawthorne's "The Hollow of the Three Hills" was a well-written Gothic story with bewitching appeal for local readers, considering Salem's inquisitional history.

The storyline about a runaway wife's torment over the turmoil she has left at home carries a message on three levels. On the surface, its lesson was that the price of a wife's abandoning responsibilities is death and chaos. This tale was the kind of fare that Henrik Ibsen's Torvald Helmer might read to his mate for her bedtime edification. Hawthorne knew an editor would like that. But the second message seems to ridicule the idea that an abandoned husband will go mad with grief and offspring will wither and die--not in an era where women's death in childbirth was such a common occurrence that the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer contained a sacrament for surviving the ordeal.[10] Few men, *then or now*, go mad when they lose a mate; they may be depressed for a time, but they generally soon seek another, as was usually the case in times when women died by the thousands in childbirth. A runaway or dead wife often represented an inconvenience.

But the third message was Hawthorne's reiteration of household tragedy: Women had no refuge if a marriage was loveless, cheerless, or abusive as well as fraught with dawn-to-dark responsibilities. No alternatives existed then.

Two years later, Hawthorne had several sales behind him--many involving women. Roy Male points out that the author was testing "just about every possible alternative to the union between man and woman,"[11] and editors knew readers *were* interested in stories featuring women.

There is only one woman in "Roger Malvin's Burial," but her role is pivotal to the plot and an attractive *bete noire* to male readers who can identify with someone who has sold his honor and soul to acquire a bride, property, and status. Mary Rohrberger sees Oedipal touches in this story.[12] Perhaps Hawthorne recognized that such readers truly would believe that women were incapable of understanding the realities of the battlefield; however, most women readers of yesteryear and today recognize that survival comes *before* burying the dead.

As this story unfolds, it is impossible not to conclude that Hawthorne is presenting a woman's familiar dilemma, playing the heavy for Nature and Society, a controller guilty of stripping a man of what he values most: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Reuben wants to be an eternally irresponsible boy, one who likes to play soldier, to explore the woods, and to sow wild oats; but he also expects a roof over his head, a hot supper, and, somewhere on a pedestal, a pretty little thing who never cramps his style, never wavers, never ages, and never expects him to do a thing. He is Peter Pan. A Peer Gynt perceiving he is the victim of a controller who owns their farm, his seed, and now wants his soul.

Hawthorne created Dorcas and her dead father to symbolize the heavy responsibilities of an adult. Written in hyperbolic shorthand, this tale depicts the fate of man's idealized woman (comely, faithful, devoted, tender--and rich) who still does not measure up; worse, she sets traps--like parenthood--to imprison him. To wrench free of such a manipulative jailer, he sets about to destroy Dorcas and the guilt about her father's fate, his real burden. In short order, Reuben reduces her prosperous farm to rack and ruin, isolates her from society, and then marches her and their son off to death in Hawthorne's celebrated and symbolic wilderness.

Reuben's moment of Pyrrhic triumph comes when he shoots their son at the same place where he left her father unburied; he then watches with what seems to be sadistical pleasure at Dorcas' breaking heart, knowing he is free of her, societal duties, and guilt. As this grim story closes, there can be no doubt that Hawthorne's view was that although men set agonizingly high standards for mature adults, only women are mandated with manacles to meet them; many a Dorcas has suffered the living death of being called a grasping, controlling nag--regularly and in public. Then and now, Society's punishment for restive female Peter Pans still is so harsh that few women risk it.

The woods are also the proving grounds for "Young Goodman Brown." Up to the time when Leo B. Levy devoted an entire article on the good wife, Faith, most studies had focused on her husband. Scholarly wars have been fought over religious aspects in this story; or Goodman's inability to accept human failings; if Faith got any attention at all, she was dismissed as a Magdalene-madonna duality: saint-sinner, destroyer-savior, poisoner-purifier. Oddly, many women see her as a warm little bride, delighted to be totally in tune with her husband. With such a wife, the marriage should be ideal.

From a woman's point of view, Hawthorne seems to be positing that healthy marital relations are impossible so long as the man believes women and sex are instruments of the Devil. At the outset, Goodman has a healthy, robust sexual and soul-to-soul relationship with Faith that is highly enviable. But despite three months of marital bliss, Goodman Brown must face the Eve notion through a Walpurgis night--an intuition to men's views of women; for what is that gathering but a stag party staged to destroy harmonious relationships between men and women?

The dream sequence has inspired hundreds of doctoral dissertations and articles, to be sure. But perhaps only women could possibly interpret it as a highly accurate picture of the acculturated id as it transports the husband's perception of a loving mate (Faith) to that of a group whore. Hawthorne's "The Haunted Mind" utilized the sequential stages of a dream whereby bits and pieces of the subconscious were fashioned into a tapestry of classic male terrors about females.

As Goodman descends deeper into this celebrated dream, out rush his true feelings about women in general and Faith in particular. There is some good-old-boy lechery about his bride ("there's a goodly young woman to be taken into communion"); that leads to thoughts about "gang action," a terrible, yet fascinating (and common) fantasy to the randy male. To pound home the point, there is a basin in a rock filled with a liquid ("was it blood?"), suggesting a group breaching of the maidenhead.

What follows is the "communion" scene, something Goodman's religious scruples appear to dread, all the while delighting in its wickedness. Then comes the schizophrenic response that baffles most women: that sexual intercourse defiles a woman. The Walpurgis dream has now become reality for this young oaf. He now believes Faith has turned Magdalene, servicing half the town; she has sullied his body and honor. Faith is no longer the affectionate, bubbly soulmate, but a Salome, a pariah in a New England town.

By the time Goodman utters that Aristotelian "cry of recognition," ("Faith! Faith! Look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one"), the "truth" has been embedded in his mind forever. Hawthorne forces us to recall how happy Adam and Eve were in Eden before Judeo-Christian scribes made natural acts sinful. Like Reuben, Goodman punishes her for the rest of her life for something rooted in *his* glands and *his* religion. The Eve myth has done its destructive work.

Another character who blasphemes Christian concepts of marriage or companionship between the sexes, is the protagonist in "The Minister's Black Veil." Hawthorne did not create The Reverend Mr. Hooper from whole cloth; nor with his global view did he seem to be attacking the church although there can be no doubt

that he must have taken delight in asking uncomfortable men of the cloth how many preachers had "taken the veil." Swann (1991) seems to have become enmeshed in the usual eclectic red herrings. He is involved in the religiosity of Michael Cloacurcio, compounding it with history and creative writing *per se:*

> While historical knowledge certainly is crucial for a full understanding of the tale, even on a first reading it should be clear that Hawthorne is overtly concerned with what sort of a writer he should be....[13]

But at least there is a glimmering of what Hawthorne was trying to say about women when Swann gets enmeshed with feminist critics and feminist writers. Instead of perceiving that Hawthorne believed in equality of the sexes, however (particularly with "The New Adam and Eve"), Swann appears to translate a little equality into a total takeover of the sexes:

> The possibility--even the desirability--of matriarchy haunts Hawthorne's fiction and is nearly always defined as natural or Utopian.[14]

That "The New Adam and Eve" short story may be one of Hawthorne's singular sallies into humor, a hyperbolic satire on how to level the playing field seems not to occur to Swann or, for that matter, many serious scholars. Traditional fears of giving an inch to a woman character are apparent in the fruits of examining the author's novels:

> Hester ends by prophesying the second coming of Christ--only this time as a woman. Coverdale, in *The Blithedale Romance*, attacks Hollingsworth for "the intensity" of his "masculine egotism" and claims a woman ruler for his Utopia: "I should love dearly--for the next thousand years at last--to have all government devolve into the hands of women...Oh, in the better order of things, Heaven grant that the ministry of souls may be left in charge of women![15]

Targeted in "The Minister's Black Veil," a brilliant tale of misogyny, confirmed bachelors may believe Hawthorne is dealing only with minister.

How many high school English teachers have probed beneath the anthologists' explanation that this story was a Jeremiad against human intolerance and/or sinfulness? For decades, its inclusion in textbooks as an example of Hawthorne scarcely made him popular. Boys generally guffaw about the Lone Ranger disguise and write him off as a Cotton Mather weirdo. But not the girls.

Girls generally loathe "The Minister's Black Veil" and not just because organized religion has declared their sex to be evil incarnate or because the paragraphs are formidably lengthy. Girls usually miss Hooper's oily confessions from the pulpit about his "secret sins" and the brilliant touches Hawthorne has crafted into a story about a man who has contemptuously diddled everybody and everything of value--fiancee, congregation, the church, fundamental spiritual values of light and joy.

But the instincts of teenage girls are as unerring as their older sisters in sensing that Hooper is a toxic man, one who is up to no good. Even if he *is* a minister, this is an enemy of women. Who else would despise weddings? Be rude to fairly decent folk who offer meals? Or die trying to lay shouted guilt on those kind enough to keep a death vigil?

It is when one focuses on the women in this story that the enigma of Hooper is solved. Hawthorne scatters the clues everywhere about this more conniving and complex Reuben. The clues begin with the story's title, for what has Hooper done except "taken the veil," in the Catholic concept of this term? Celibacy allows a man officially to wall out women; too, priests do better than preachers at using sacraments to strip women of power; at last, a chasuble provides official license to snuff out Eves. Hooper's difficulty, however, is that for a Protestant pastor, bachelorhood is out of the question. *Someone* must perform the Herculean duties of a preacher's wife.

Hawthorne offers up Elizabeth, a superb candidate. She is friendly, devoted, sensible, warm, intelligent, and beautiful. But Hooper shrinks from marriage, walling her out with a veil. But then the veils of the nonministerial do seem to be today's fear-wrecked rejection: "I'm just not ready to make a commitment." There is twisted pleasure in Hooper's lifetime rejection of Elizabeth, particularly at his death. He is more resourceful at destroying women's power than Reuben.

As a minister, his best work should be at funerals, and Hawthorne provides one--for a "young lady"--that launched a thousand theories about that aspect of the mysterious Reverend Hooper. Poe, for example, theorized he had murdered her; Hawthorne did write: "when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap." But it is equally possible that the woman was appalled that the officiant guiding her into the light, warmth, and joyous fellowship of God was an Antichrist dolled up in a curtain.

Then there is the wedding of "the handsomest couple in Milford." Evening rites in New England are so uncommon as to be remarkable, and Hooper succeeds in making it a horror for a bewildered couple. There is an especially unspeakable insult to the institution of marriage through an onanistic gesture from Hooper. Hawthorne has him catching a glimpse of himself in a mirror--particularly his *figure*--adding that he "spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness,"

Last, there are the smiles. One smile might go unnoticed, but not six in Hawthorne's economical writing style. All of the smiles involve women. The first smile follows Elizabeth's plea to remove or to explain the veil; the second is his response to her warning that the parish is restive about his behavior. Next, he has succeeded in avoiding parish dinner tables, smiling at the bewildered standing on the sidewalk. ("I would not be

alone with him for the world," says the doctor's wife).

The fourth smile comes after all of New England has begun to call him *Father*; having attained a priestly identity, he needs to worry no more about women. True, Elizabeth trods respectfully through his life, rewarded by finally penetrating his bedroom only when he is a dying old man. The deathbed scene includes *two* smiles: one after the successful tussle with The Reverend Mr. Clark who wants to lift the veil. The last smile comes after he rebukes the mourners, charging them with all wearing veils:

> While his auditors shrank from one another, in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips.

Considering the lonely wreckage of his life, this parable strongly indicates the laugh is on him. As for Elisabeth, she is far luckier than the heroine of "The Birthmark."

One Oregon professor recently expressed mock surprise in class that "The Birthmark" generally infuriates women students, but fails to stir the men. The tale may be seen as horrifying satire about the results of scientific methods, but the blatant misogyny does seem to overpower that traditional surface interpretation; any job can shut out women. So Hawthorne hits two themes with one stone. Most women pick up the obvious theme from Aylmer's honeymoon dialogue ("Has it never occurred to you that the mark upon your cheek might be removed?"). Women know that they are measured by *both* sexes largely on their looks. Even if men fear women, at least most appear to want one that passes the aesthetic values of the male concept of beauty. Women must be without flaw (slim, beautiful, and forever age 18-22) to have worth. Ironically, beautiful women point out that they are more feared and abused than Plain Janes, perhaps because flawless looks have empowerment. Roy Male is not alone in seeing this ploy as proof that it's a tactic for men to avoid mutuality with a woman, particularly ironic when many fear beautiful women into the bargain.[17]

The deaths and self-destructive thinking connected to anorexia, bulimia, and aging provide ample evidence of the effectiveness of this method of controlling women; the billion-dollar beauty industry, breast implants, and, other cosmetic surgery exist because of the power of such suggestions.

Another reason this story raises women's ire is Georgiana's eventual frantic cooperation with her own murder, especially because such a sacrifice does *not* earn closeness with her husband. Here Hawthorne touched a nerve, for Georgiana is not alone when, one day, she hammers in vain at the bolted doors of her mate's inner-sanctum; for her trouble, she gets a sample of demonic rage at the interruption.

Georgiana doggedly pores over works in her husband's library, loyally ignoring the journals that reveal his many failed experiments. She becomes his laboratory animal, acquiescing to demonstrations involving plants and photography. Aylmer throws a plate into a "jar of corrosive acid," a foreshadowing of her fate, but she ignores that signal. The nadir of her self-degredation is his forcing her to sing--just as he forces lab mice to perform. There is something Poe-like about Georgiana as she allows herself to be confined in a boudoir as sinister as that in "Ligeia" or the copper walls and screw-down coffin in "The Fall of the House of Usher." Would that she had carried out her threat to go "home to mother" at the story's start.

"Rappaccini's Daughter" is Hawthorne's greatest portrayal of the man-woman *tragedy*. Here is the seeming summation of all that a Young Goodman Brown feared and in a sunny, yet malevolent, perversion of the Garden of Eden. This time Eve is *not* the one who causes The Fall. It is Adam.

Beatrice Rappaccini is real. She is hardly as well developed and dominating a character as Miriam Schaefer in *The Marble Faun*, but she will do admirably as a short-story heroine, "the first of Hawthorne's fully developed women--dark, exotic, ambiguous in her 'poisonous' combination of sexual attractiveness and angelic purity."[18] Yet one of the obstacles to an analysis of Beatrice is the traditional *idee fixe* on "the dark lady" aspect of Hawthorne. This aspect generally rests on the adjectives used to describe women such as Hester Prynne, Zenobia, and Miriam Schaefer. Hall (1990) is yet another scholar drawn to this fixation, with the additional ingredient of an "exotic nature."[19] But it is Beatrice's actions and dialogue that reveal Hawthorne's intent.

Hawthorne's selection of Padua as setting could suggest Dante's self-imposed fear of courting and wedding (or bedding) the beauteous and wealthy Beatrice Portinari, the inspiration for his love poetry.[20] Hawthorne certainly recognized that dynamic, for he had portrayed it previously in "The Artist of the Beautiful." Again, if a woman is worshiped from *afar*, the distance renders a man as safe as if he had put on Father Hooper's black veil.

Beatrice Rappaccini, like her namesake, causes the same Dantesque reaction from Giovanni, a similar ambivalence about women as noted by Brenzo. To Giovanni, falling in love means loss of control. Hawthorne captures this terror well:

> It mattered not whether she were angel or demon; he was irrevocably within her sphere, and must obey the law that whirled him onward, in ever-lessening circles, towards a result which he did not attempt to foreshadow; and yet, strange to say, there came across him a sudden doubt whether this intense interest on his part were not delusory; whether it were really so deep and positive a nature as to justify him in now thrusting himself into an incalculable position; whether it were not merely the fantasy of a young man's brain, only slightly or not at all connected with

his heart.

Giovanni's struggle to stifle his love is what, as Hawthorne seems to say, constitutes male fear of humanity's most fulfilling reward: opening the soul and heart to another. Women like Beatrice hold their breaths, hoping the men they love will take that leap. She tries reassurance:

> Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me. If true to the outward senses, still it may be false in its essence; but the words of Beatrice Rappaccini's lips are true from the depths of the heart outward. Those you may believe.

Unfortunately, Giovanni cannot let go of his fears. Nor can the other two men in her life. Brenzo sees their characters unmasked as they both use her; but her greatest suffering comes from Giovanni's cowardice:

> For Giovanni, sexual commitment to Beatrice means death in the sense of being dominated by a woman, being robbed of his independence, and having his personality swallowed up. Beatrice actually makes no attempt to bind him to her; she professes to want "only to love thee, and be with thee a little time and so to let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in mine heart"....In fact, Giovanni has a real compulsion to possess Beatrice, to change and control her, a compulsion revealed by his attempts to know her sexually, and by his persistent desire to shape her into his personal woman who will gratify his ego and conform to his fantasies.[20]

Not even Beatrice's saving him from a poisonous bloom or her willingness to ingest a potion that she strongly suspects will kill her convinces Giovanni that she is not a Lucrezia Borgia with a beaker of poison or Snow White's wicked stepmother proffering Eve's apple. Hawthorne may have felt obtuse readers required wilting bouquets and dying insects to understand the deadliness of the relationship; yet even astute readers may miss his point that the heroine has survived--even thrived--in a toxic environment totally created by men. She has an elegant home, sufficient brilliance to take over a science professorship (causing a rival to provide the death potion preferred by her cowardly lover--an adroit touch faculty women can appreciate). Beatrice also has a Cenci-like father, who has set in motion the circumstances that destroy her perceived superhuman power. Whether it is cerebral incest or rearing a daughter in a chemical sewer, Rappaccini has played the traditional role well in deliberately destroying her chances at sharing Hawthorne's symbolic hearthside with a good, loving man.

There can be no finer curtain speech about just who is poisoning whom in the relationship than Beatrice's when she asks:

> Was there not, from the first, more poison in thy nature than in mine?

The dilemma and the despair in the relationships between the sexes are major factors of Hawthorne's "tragic vision." In a sense the tragedy occurs because repairing aeons of damage seems hopeless, particularly when Eve seems to be the only one working toward Hawthorne's hearth. Our own century's battering, glass ceilings, and ghastly disclosures in counseling sessions make Hawthorne's own positive relationships with women seem unobtainable.

Apparently, Hawthorne's awareness of mutual fears was the first step in taking action to solve the problems between men and women and to show that men's fears were largely groundless. Unfortunately, he had to garb this vital message in allegory. A philosophy espousing that men (and women) really do love one another is the most difficult credo ever to lay upon any civilization. Its purveyors have not fared well against those who fear women most of all.

ENDNOTES

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When is a Singing School (Not) a Chorus?
The Emancipatory Agenda in Feminist Pedagogy and Literature Education

by Deanne Bogdan

A shorter version of this paper was presented to the WILLA co-sponsored session, "Feminist Pedagogy in the Increasingly Complex Classroom" at the NCTE conference in Louisville, Kentucky, November, 1992. This version was presented at the meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, New Orleans, Louisiana, March, 1993, and will appear in the Proceedings of the Forty-Ninth Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society, ed. Audrey Thompson, NORMAL, ILL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1993. It will also be published as a chapter in Lynda Stone, ed., The Education Feminism Reader, New York: Routledge, 1993.

This paper addresses the conundrum of why, for some of us, the more we become sensitized to the imperatives of democratic education and student ownership of their own learning, the harder they can become actually to accomplish in a classroom. This is especially true in literature education and feminist/critical pedagogy, where personal and social transformation are implicit and explicit goals. Underlying the ethical aims of feminist pedagogy and literature education is accepting the Other on the Other's own terms.[1] In classrooms full of real readers reading, this principle, which informs what Elizabeth Ellsworth has called "a pedagogy of the unknowable,"[2] plays itself out in the interstices between authority and trust, academic rigor and personal empathy, community and fracture, professional and political responsibility. Recently Deborah Britzman has analyzed her student teachers' attempts to implement critical/feminist pedagogical methods in English education at the secondary school level, detailing the complexity of the tensions and contradictions which mark "not just what it means to know and be known, but how we come to know and come to refuse knowledge."[3] To expose a liberatory agenda is often to embark on a "pedagogical encounter," which, in Britzman's words, is simply "scary."

> More often than not, things do not go according to plan": objectives reappear as too simple, too complicated, or get lost; concepts become glossed over, require long detours, or go awry.... In short, pedagogy is filled with surprises, involuntary returns, and unanticipated twists.[4]

My reflections arise out of my more recent experiences teaching at my home institution, which is a Graduate Department of Education. In contrast to Britzman's grade ten class, our students are mature adults, many of them seasoned, successful teachers in their own right, who bring to the learning environment highly diverse personal, professional, and disciplinary backgrounds. But even within this milieu, the very heightening of consciousness about the changing intellectual and political premises of English studies, heavily influenced by critical/feminist pedagogy, can threaten at any given moment to break down into solipsistic worldviews and group alienation.

References to "the Singing School" in my title (with apologies to Yeats and Northrop Frye)[5] and whether or not it is a "Chorus" signal the tension between what an instructor perceives to be happening and what may in fact be happening with respect to the learning taking place. For me, "the Singing School" has become a metaphor for what we might think of as a "dream class," that is, one in which achieving the objectives of a course becomes seamlessly incorporated into the process itself, and where the joy of teaching is indistinguishable from being a student of the students'-learning.[6] The apotheosis of my dream class was my women's literature and feminist criticism class of 1988, which accepted my invitation to embark with me on a collaborative experiment to explore the feminist critique of Romanticism, a subject in which I am not a specialist. In thinking and writing about the sheer exuberance of that experience since then, I have tried in vain to isolate the factors that might account for what had seemed so successful to us all in working across difference. Was it that the more democratic collaborative setting had allowed me to comfortably shed my role as "expert"? Was it the carefully sequenced readings and exercises? Was it that the students enjoyed reader-response journal writing, for most of them a "first" in graduate education--or, were we all just nice people?[7] And--how accurate, in any case, is the absence of factional strife or the presence of a mutually reinforcing class dynamic as a barometer of productive learning?

By contrast, the first time I taught women's literature and feminist criticism (in hindsight probably the most transformational event in my professional life), the tenor of the class was totally the reverse of that of the Singing School. It was no euphonious chorus! Bent on taking literature personally and politically at any cost, that group of highly sophisticated, but combustible readers literally mutinied against the strictures of the traditional culture of literary critical interpretation in repudiating the offensive sexist bias in John Updike's short story "A&P," becoming what at the time I thought were literary "illiterates"--by reversing the norms of what was deemed "naive" and what, "educated."[8] Yet, in my discussions with those students since then, we've concluded that, in the depths of all that anguish, none of us ever stopped thinking feelingly or feeling thinkingly about what we were doing and why. Psychic suffering *can* be a powerful condition of learning, but it's not that simple either. That incursions into the inner life are necessary effects of any coming to know does not give teachers license to perform the "god trick and all its dazzling--and, therefore blinding--illuminations"[9] on unsuspecting students. Professorial hubris, an occupational hazard of al teaching, which by its very nature invokes change, is

especially pertinent to English studies and feminist pedagogy, whose mandate espouses liberation, whether that liberation be from the "hegemony" of The Great Tradition to the "freedom" of discourse theory, or simply toward a more egalitarian classroom.

Over the twelve years that I've been teaching at the graduate level, in both feminist literary criticism seminars and in "mainstream" philosophy of literature courses, I have moved from a performance pedagogical mode and a fairly tightly structured curriculum to a more decentered classroom and a syllabus constantly open to revision. But that doesn't mean that I can tell any better when a class is "working" and when it isn't. How do I know that what looks like everyone riding our communal bicycle is not really a coercive regime masking silences and erasing hostilities? And conversely, given that my role is so fraught with paradox, especially in a feminist class, where I am invariably cast as "the bearded mother" (expected to be both supportive emotionally and rigorous scholastically)[10], how do I know that something quite wonderful is not happening to someone? What am I, for instance, to make of the remark of one of my best students who sincerely thought she was paying a compliment with, "I really love your class. It makes me sick to my stomach"? By this I take her to mean that she was involved in what Shoshana Felman calls "self-subversive self-reflection,"[11] a process in which her presuppositions about the conditions of her own learning were continually being thrown open to question by herself and by others whose intellectual training, political temper, and disciplinary affiliations differed markedly from hers. Though this polylogue can be productive, it can also precipitate dialogic impasse, especially in an interdisciplinary class, when one hears statements such as, "I understand where you are coming from, but have you read X?" (a book or article intended to correct what is presumed by the questioner to be Other's misguided ideology about what should count as knowledge).

Accepting the Other on the other's own terms entails self-subversive self-reflection about our own paths of identification; it also foregrounds the ethical importance of what Northrop Frye called the "direct" or "participating" response[12]--to literature and to fervently held assumptions about one's own life. In the literary education enterprise there is, of course, no substitute for knowledge *about* texts and their theoretical implications. *What people* say, *how* they respond, is doubtless important; but, *that they do* in this or that way is in some respects a prior consideration. That is to say, performative utterances situate students as moral beings, who in turn form the social fabric of the classroom community. This is a crucial point when dealing with the personal and the political implications of response to literature, inasmuch as the pedagogical importance of cultural codes cannot claim epistemic privilege over students' affective lives. While discourse strategies may improve conceptual understanding, they do not necessarily alter autobiographical significance, which I suggest is an educational value in need of further theorization within both feminist pedagogy and the philosophy of literature education. That is to say, while my literary interpretation may be "better" than yours, and my analysis of classroom dynamics possibly more astute, I, nevertheless, cannot make you mean.[13] The ontological force of this dictum is a logical extension of politicizing and privileging "direct" literary response at the same time (a contradictory endeavor, as we'll see).

It was this problematic of re-educating the imagination, which I consciously undertook when I returned to the classroom after a year's sabbatical during which I completed a book addressing issues related to canon, curriculum, and literary response.[14] In designing the course (a "mainstream" course dealing with literature and values in education, also taught for the first time), I wanted to replicate the structure of my own argument in the book as well as to let the phenomenology of my journey in the feminist critique of Frye's concept of the educated imagination unfold, as I intended that it would for my reader. Since the book was still in press and I felt uncomfortable about distributing the manuscript, I combined sequenced ancillary readings that had informed my own thinking in writing the book with class discussion and twenty-minute lectures from the text of my manuscript.

The class (twelve women and three men), composed mostly of high-school and community college English teachers, began as another "dream" Singing School, and ended, if not in a nightmare, in the purgatorial twilight zone of bruised identities and painful oppositional stances between the majority, who "got" it, and the minority who "didn't." I focus on this in order to highlight the complexities of how bringing the personal and the political simultaneously into the discussion of response to literature might help us think about the discrepancies between what we think is happening in front of us and what in fact might be going on. When, indeed, is a Singing School not a chorus? When is feeling sick to your stomach an indication, not of the "natural" part of coming to consciousness, but of the oppressive effects of too much consciousness at the wrong time and in the wrong circumstance? And when might it be producing what Teresa de Lauretis calls a "genuine epistemological shift"[15]? When does honoring the Other on the Other's own terms bridge the intrinsic and extrinsic value of literacy education and when is it simply the arrogant admonition by those who presume to "know" of those who would know better? And--does it matter whether it is one or the other?

Let's first look at what made me think last year's Singing School was tuneful. My sense of it as a "dream class," the feeling that it was going swimmingly or that the class was teaching itself, was confined to the first half of the course, where the students quickly took hold of my clear-cut conceptual framework. (The course examined the interdependence of the why, what, and how of

teaching literature under the rubric of a "meta-problem," which juxtaposes the issues of justifying the teaching of literature [why], canon/curriculum/censorship [what], and the classroom treatment of reader response [how]). The promise of seriously working across difference came early when one of the men, Kevin, signed up to do a seminar on Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection later on in the course.[16] As time went on, I consulted with the students about revising the balance between new content and digesting what had gone before. At about the half-way point, another student, Ellen, conducted a lucid account of my taxonomy of Frye's developmental theory of reader response. Here she used a tape of John Updike reading his "A&P," the "invidious" piece that had been the site of the previous rebellion in my women's literature and feminist criticism class. Now, however, reactions were multiple: some students were chuckling with obvious enjoyment: others were grim; still others, pensive. No one, it seemed, was unengaged. The presenter herself had intentionally adhered to Frye's structure, a hierarchy of pre- to "post-critical" response, with "autonomous" at the top; describing her initial feminist response to the story as an "angry," and therefore "negative" and "lesser" stock response, she acknowledged that it had become more "refined" to a "fuller" more "literary" one as she saw herself moving through her "raw experience" to an understanding of the story as a whole in a "greater appreciation of the human condition." (Later, after reading Sandra Lee Bartky, she observed that she was probably able to do this because she was a younger feminist, and had not experienced "the double ontological shock" Bartky describes.[17]) As people began to discuss the conditions of their responses more openly, I had the feeling that this was just about the ideal class. They were doing double-takes all over the place, but really communicating. What possibly could have been better?

There was, however, a nagging doubt that just maybe the class was beginning to feel being set-up by the agenda of the course, which remained largely hidden from them. Ellen's presentation had in a way become a perfect foil for the following week's seminar, in which we dealt with my feminist subversion of my taxonomy. But the effect on her of that reversal and indeed of the feminist cast of the rest of the course was for some, quite emotionally devastating. I began to ask myself whether, in the actualizing of my pedagogical project, I had helped produce at least one casualty of its very efficacy. If so, what did that mean about my respect for my students' learning? Shouldn't students be subjects, not just objects, of their own transformations? Who is responsible for the psychological cost of such transformations? And--what right did I have doing what I was doing at all? I went to the next seminar convinced that my book manuscript would still be the informing principle of the rest of the course, but the *controlling* principle. That is, I resolved to reserve more discussion time in order to diffuse any latent hostility generated by my possibly manipulating the students into enlightenment (I had to "give them" more power), to loosen my hold on the structure, stop lecturing, and focus on student presentations of the secondary material without my intervention except as "just" another member of the class.

This proved to be yet another paradox of decentered teaching. There was no way I could divest myself of my authority, already established by the heuristic I'd set up at the beginning and reinforced by my own invisible manuscript as a major component of the course content. Even more worrisome to me was the fact that I was increasingly becoming identified with a more rigid ideological stance toward the course material than I in fact held. As well, coincident with my decentering, the majority of the women and one of the three men had begun to evince their profeminist concerns more overtly; others complained that in the second half of the course there was a loss of continuity in the conceptual framework, which, of course, only I could provide. Little wonder that I felt the class was polarizing badly and that its exploratory intent seemed to have become submerged in a "search for answers."

The Updike episode had opened up the possibility of a *poetics of refusal* that had taken seriously the negative effects of the close proximity of some literary content to the lived lives of readers. These students had extended that discussion to include how being very close to the bone of real experience also affected their critical temper and their own teaching practices. Though the positive exchange in the class, as well as the students' final papers, persuaded me that the self-subversive self-reflection of most of them had indeed produced heightened sensitivity to the Other, anger, silence, and denial also surfaced. These came to the fore when another woman, Clare, did a forceful reading *with* the grain, of Robin Morgan's *The Demon Lover: The Sexuality of Terrorism*.[18] Clare's intent was to "put on" Morgan's polemic in relating social and cultural processes to systemic misogyny. That seemed to tap into the deep but covert rage felt by some of them, until, more "detached" feminists, who now were able to recover their voice--and did, with vehement recognition scenes. Ellen, however, did not join that chorus, but became noticeably upset, excusing herself in tears at the break. A few days later she confessed her anxieties about remaining in graduate school: the course had triggered in her feelings of futility about academic work, and she thought that perhaps she should return to high-school teaching. Having become alienated from literature as a living force in her life through doing an M.A. in a highly conservative English department, she had relished the prospect of our trek into theory; but now she had second thoughts about its value if such negativity as was being expressed in the class was still rampant after so many years of feminism. A staunch feminist as an undergraduate, she'd expected that by now feminism would have "moved ahead to something more inclusive." This, in face of the fact that figuring in her present crisis was that she was mourning the murder of one of her own female students. Ironically,

though, Ellen's path of identification, which she confirmed in her final paper, was with the two "outsider" men in the class, both of whom were feeling embattled. One was Kevin, who told me that he was surprised to encounter so much feminist content in a course that wasn't advertised as such.

Kevin was also full of contradictions. In his seminar on Kristeva, while he bravely grappled with her complex notion of abjection, something which he acknowledged he could understand only intellectually from his privilege as a white, heterosexual male, he ended his presentation by bringing in Robert Bly's *Iron John*,[19] thereby positioning himself as victim. And--in the discussion period, he deliberately interpolated the term "terrorist" to describe what he referred to as "militant feminism," This, he said after class, was a strategic move to address the by now palpable feminist agenda of the course. When another woman, Jennifer, rewrote "A&P" from the viewpoint of "the witch about fifty, with rouge on her cheekbones and no eyebrows"[20] as a way of expressing her "epistemic privilege"[21], her feelings of being Othered by Updike, Kevin simply dug in his heels, insisting that the portrayal of the males in Jennifer's rewrite didn't remotely resemble him or any guy he knew.

Perhaps Ellen and Kevin were in part both trying to find their own "safe house" in face of their loss of a certain conceptual security, which had been provided by the structural framework of the course set up at the beginning, and of their pedagogical loss of the bearded mother. It is worth mentioning that in this class these losses coincided with the introduction of explicitly feminist content, which complicated the meta-problem with what we might call the "feeling, power, and location problems,"[22] What seems clear about Ellen and Kevin is that they were both thrown up against their own resistance--Ellen as one who already knew too much and perhaps wanted to know less, at least for now; and Kevin as one who couldn't cope with his own awareness of what he didn't yet know. But by the end of the course this playing field looked profoundly unequal: whereas Kevin was voluble, Ellen fell silent. It's difficult to assess here who "got" it and who "didn't"; moreover, what is the "it"? Did Ellen "get" "it" and just couldn't bear to feel "it," yet again, in her solar plexus? Did Kevin have to fill up the space because he couldn't hear "it," or because he could? Does he remain an "unreconstructed male"? Is that my business? What *I* perceived was that Ellen was experiencing Bartky's "double ontological shock" more or less alone, and that Kevin's feelings were being taken care of by me and the rest of the class. When is honoring the Other on the Other's own terms truly emancipatory and when might it mask a false integrity?

This year, when I teach the course again, the students will be in possession of the text of my book; my feminist project will be more visible to them from the start; and my pedagogy will consist almost exclusively of small groups reading and writing each other's short papers in response to the primary and ancillary texts. That might mitigate, but will not eliminate, the incessant transferring and withdrawing of powerful psychic projections that necessarily abound when the personal and political contexts of literary response form part of the agenda of a literature classroom, in grade ten English or a graduate seminar in literature education. Once we credit transformation of any kind as a legitimate goal of our teaching, literature ends up with more relevance to life than many of us who entered the profession as a partial escape from life originally bargained for. One can only be where one is in literary criticism, but to be wherever one is today is indeed a "perilous undertaking,"[23] in which the resistances of students like Ellen and Kevin have become a new body of content--inchoate, untidy, but nonetheless sacred, matter.

Does this mean that teachers of literature are the unwitting "mental health paraprofessionals," which Clara Park (in *Uses of Literature*, one of the volumes of the 1973 *Harvard English Studies*) said back then, that we perforce become?[24] As someone professing to be a philosopher of literature education, not a clinical psychologist or bibliotherapist, I can't say that I'm really up for this.[25] But as a practitioner of feminist pedagogy, I don't find the alternatives wholly satisfactory either. Returning to uncritiqued notions of "literariness" and universalist paths of identification, innocent of political awareness, is certainly no option for me. That only makes it easier for some to move from pre-feminist or pre-colonial unconsciousness to appropriation without ever having to pass through comprehension. Even abandoning transformational agendas altogether--teaching the theory wars or navigating students through endless textual undoings and remakings--cannot blanket over the still monumental significance of the intervention by "words with power"[26] in the emotional lives of people who really might be changed by what they learn in school.

Felman suggests that "the most far-reaching insight psychoanalysis can give us into pedagogy" is the realization that "the position of the teacher is itself the position of one who learns, of the one who teaches nothing other than the way [s]he learns. The subject of teaching is interminably--a student; the subject of teaching interminably--a learning."[27] And, she argues, this knowledge is a fundamentally *literary* knowledge in that it is knowledge "*not in possession of itself.*"[28] Within this context, students' resistance to knowing is perhaps one of the best teaching tools we have. As Felman, Frye (and others before them) have observed, teaching is impossible; that is why it is difficult.[29] What, then, are we to do? In coming to solutions, we might keep in mind the thoughts of the young Polish pianist Krystain Zimerman, who gave a master class in Toronto last spring. In concluding his remarks to the audience and to the five students whose sparkling performances he'd unabashedly acknowledged his admiration for, he said, "Of course, we study the text, and then improvise around it. The rest is up to you. But the most important thing is

to do [sic] mistakes, as many as possible and as soon as possible."[31]

Ellen did decide to remain in graduate school, and even won a scholarship. In her final paper, she reflected on our various mistakes when she responded to the optional question I set about the experience of the course as a whole:

> My unusually emotional response to this course was of considerable concern to me, hence the amount of time spent analyzing my feelings and discussing the situation with friends. I have concluded that mine has been a rather ironic and yet educational experience. What I have encountered, I think, is a very real feeling, power, and location problem within a course where [these problems were] not only recognized but apparently sympathized with. ... What I am left with primarily are not feelings of alienation ... or cynicism ... (although these feelings do exist still); rather, I have become more profoundly aware of just haw complex perception, communication, and inter [personal] relations are and just haw difficult it is *not* to make assumptions, to disempower someone or to silence opposition in a group setting. I am also much more aware of how emotions, social contexts, and personal meanings and experiences affect learning, which has been traditionally seen as [only] an intellectual activity.

Here Ellen has named for herself what David Bleich has called the "affective [inter]dependency" of the classroom.[32] Perhaps a Singing School can still be a chorus, if dissonance be part of resonance.

ENDNOTES

1. Contemporary literary theory has propelled the profession beyond unproblematized Arnoldian or Leavisite assumptions about the liberatory nature of English studies. But teaching to or for theoretical understanding does not erase the question of the powerful impetus for personal change inherent in all teaching. This is especially true of literary reading. Shoshana Felman reminds us that any "reading lesson is ... not a statement; it is a performance. It is not theory, it is practice ... for (self)transformation." *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) p. 20. The rapprochement between English studies and feminist/critical pedagogy has been underscored by numerous authors, including Janice M. Wolff, who introduces her article, "Writing Passionately: Students Resistance to Feminist Reading," with the assertion that "ideological consciousness-raising is very much part of [her] faculty's concerns." *College Composition and Communication* 42 (4) (December 1991): 484. I read this paper after having completed my own, and would like to note the resemblance of its themes to this one, in particular, resistance as an instrument of learning, the gendered character of students' resistant responses, and the teacher as one who does not know.

2. Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," *Harvard Educational Review* 59 (3) (August 1989): 318.

3. Deborah P. Britzman, "Decentering Discourses in Teacher Education: Or, The Unleashing of Unpopular Things," *Journal of Education* 173 (3) (1991): 75.

4. Ibid., p. 60.

5. "The Singing School" is the title of the second chapter of Northrop Frye's *The Educated Imagination* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Company Publications, 1963), pp. 12-33. The original citation is taken from Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" (quoted in Frye, p. 12).

6. See Marion Woodman, Kate Danson, Mary Hamilton, and Rita Greer Allen, *Leaving My Father's House: A Journey to Conscious Femininity* (Boston & London: Shambala Press, 1992), p. 167

7. See Deanne Bogdan, "Joyce, Willie, and Dorothy: Literary Literacy as Engaged Reflection," *Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society*, San Antonio, Texas, April 14-17, 1989, ed. Ralph Page, Normal, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1990, pp. 168-182.

8. See Deanne Bogdan, "Judy and Her Sisters: Censorship, Identification, and the Poetics of Need" *Proceedings of the Forty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society*, San Diego, California, March 25-28, 1988, ed. James M. Giarelli, Normal, Illinois: Philosophy of Education Society, 1988; John Updike, "A&P," in his *Pigeon Feathers and Other Stories*, (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 1962).

9. Donna Haraway, "Situated: The Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988): 584.

10. Kathryn Morgan, "The Perils and Paradoxes of Feminist Pedagogy," *Resources for Feminist Research* 16 (1987): 50.

11. Shoshana Felman, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 90.

12. Northrop Frye, *The Critical Path: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1971), p.28.

13. See Susan Leslie Campbell, "Expression and the Individuation of Feeling." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (University of Toronto, 1992), p. 291; also Felman, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 119. In her response to Charles Taylor's Inaugural address to the University Center of Human Values at Princeton, Susan Wolf makes a related point about the justification for widening the canon. See *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition: An Essay by Charles Taylor, With Commentary by Amy Cutmann, Editor: Steiner C. Rockefeller, Michael Walter and Susan Wolf* (Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 79-85.

14. See Deanne Bogdan, *Re-educating the Imagination: Toward a Poetics, Politics, and Pedagogy of Literary Engagement* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook-Heinemann, 1992).

15. Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 10.

16. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982).

17. Bartky defines the "double ontological shock" as "first, the realization that what is really happening is quite different from what appears to be happening; and second, the frequent inability to tell what is really happening at all" (1979, 256).) Sandra Lee Bartky, "Towards a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness, " in *Philosophy and Women*, ed. S. Bishop and M. Weinzweig, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 256.

18. Robin Morgan, *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989).

19. Robert Bly, *Iron John, A Book About Men* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1990).

20. Updike, p. 187.

21. Uma Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice," *Hypatia* 3 (2), (1988): 34.

22. See Bogdan, *Re-educating the Imagination*, pp. 140-148.

23. Clara Clairborne Park, "Rejoicing to Concur with the Common Reader: The Uses of Literature in the Community College," in *Uses of Literature*, ed., Monroe Engel, *Harvard English studies 4*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 231.

24. Ibid., p. 242.

25. Toronto high school teacher Brian Fellow, in an article titled "Sex, Lies, and Grade 10," describes his reader-response approach to a literature lesson on the poem, "Lies," by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. According to Fellow, the theme of this poem is "Do not lie to the young." As a way of exploring its meaning with his class, Fellow wrote on the board three

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An Ethnic Passage: An Italian-American Woman in Academia

by Maryann S. Feola

At my Ph.D. commencement, I spoke with Gerry, the candidate in the next seat, about being there. We had never met before, but we discovered that we had a lot in common. Both of us had been students in the same program and were encouraged by the department head to complete the necessary requirements and move on. Along the way we had each lost a husband. Gerry's husband had gotten sick and died; mine had turned indifferent and left. And though we never spoke about being minority candidates, we tactily agreed that given my Italian surname and her Caribbean complexion, it was a minor miracle that we were there. Gerry had regrets about not inviting an aunt who ridiculed her "fancy thinking." I nodded and thought about what several of my Catholic relatives would think when I explained that the subject of my dissertation, a seventeenth century Quaker writer, had started out as a regicide, joined a radical Puritan religious sect, and ended up a pacifist who spent most of his final years in jail. In my mind, I saw my great-grandfather Orazio who had died shortly after my tenth birthday pleased that I could legitimately write "Dr." before my name, reminding my parents how he had prophesied that my brazen questions would lead to no good.

During the course of our discussion, Gerry and I speculated that the commencement ceremony might serve to exorcise the ghosts that had made long and painful the entry into academe. We talked about the emotional price we had paid for personal growth and about both loving and hating the distance that stood between our new lives and the past. But once the voice from the stage made us aware that we should be silent, my thoughts turned inward and I recalled my odyssey to self-realization past the Scylla and Charybdis of an Italian-American girlhood.

Growing up Italian-American in 1950's Brooklyn, I was taught to fear authority and follow tradition. I was reminded that thinking clearly and reserving judgment were desirable, but they ranked second to possessing "common sense." Both at home and at school I heard that questioning and criticism were the tell-tale signs of a "doubting Thomas." Speaking your mind was understandable; challenging the status quo, however, was not. Now with almost three decades between my entry into grammar school and my completion of graduate school, I thought about how I came to a profession and a lifestyle that turned upside down the lessons of my childhood.

I remembered that when I was growing up there was no doubt in my mind that I was anything but Italian. The basis of that identification had little to do with the fact that most of my family had left the impoverished rural villages that surrounded Naples some fifty years earlier: it was simply who I was. It was assumed that I would become a housewife--if I lucked out, a doctor's or lawyer's wife. I was encouraged to mind my tongue and remain close to the church and traditions that secured salvation. In other words, inquiry, esoterica, and independence were tribal taboos that evoked earnest and frequent "God forbids" from the family who sought to protect me from "all the wrong things" I seemed to love.

Like many other Italian-Americans, our family life centered around the homes of my grandparents. We lived upstairs from my father's parents; everyone else lived close by. Around dining room tables that were loaded with fruit, nuts, and wine, my grandparents told story after story about relatives or *paesani*--people from their native villages--who suffered, or, who on occasion, had caused some suffering in Italy. They emphasized how these people had struggled against the forces of fate and had managed to survive. Everyone thanked God at the end of a story, refilled their wine glasses, and glanced over to give their mischievious children dirty looks that were invariably followed by expressions of love.

At these gatherings my great-grandfather presided as master story teller. He told endless stories about Italy, stories that colored my imagination with the romantic image of another time and another place. The Italy he invented with his facts and fiction sowed the seeds of my cultural imagination and defined the borders of my parochial world.

His warm-hearted chatter and the ease with which he could instigate an argument between my grandparents shaped my interest in well-informed, eccentric characters. He was my earliest encounter with the old-world thinking that I now sit in libraries and research. If he knew me today, I believe he would consider me as shameless as the radical writers I study, but he would brag about my work to anyone who would listen.

> *Along the way we had each lost a husband. Gerry's husband had gotten sick and died; mine had turned indifferent and left.*

Great-grandpa, an incessant teacher, was particularly eager to instruct my young mother and her sisters-in-law in the fine art of rearing Italian children. Never invited to begin a lecture, he nonetheless came prepared with the power of myth and the burden of history and a walking stick which he tapped to emphasize essential points. He told these Italian-American mothers that their children must learn respect. We must learn to be careful with our money, especially it it came from

him. The boys should follow his example and become successful in this country. The girls, of course, must learn to keep spotless homes and know their place. They should also be taught to stop asking so many questions and only speak when spoken to. We must remain close as a family and be wary of the Americans--that is, anyone who is not Italian.

Our left-handedness concerned him deeply. Fortunately, neither my mother nor any of my aunts ever tied our left thumbs to our adjoining fingers as he suggested. Believing that left-handedness was an invitation to evil spirits, he saw us as likely candidates for disaster. When he was a young man, two of his children died of an epidemic that ravaged the ship which was bringing them to a better life in America. He had to warn future generations not to tempt fate.

Why were these guidelines so important to my great-grandfather? How were they influenced by the transition from old world to new? How did they shape my future?

Today, as a teacher at a multi-cultural university, I am fascinated with how immigrant families transplant their roots in America. I wonder how my students are reconciling new ideas and new ways of communicating with their family traditions? What will they gain? What will they lose? Like me, will their movement away from the traditions of the past make them feel like strangers?

Memories of my girlhood daydreams and adventures are mixed with images of those numerous great-aunts dressed in black warning me not to forget who I was. My interests, dress, and plans for the future might stem from personal taste; however, they must not break with the traditions that offered security. How I loved the spidery handwriting in the letters of my Neapolitan relatives thanking my Grandma Mamie for her generous packages. My grandmother happily translated these letters for me and filled in the details of my impoverished relatives' lives. These letters, while they may have fueled my romantic imagination and transported me to an exotic world, also reminded me of sorrow and humility not-too-far removed.

To most of my parents' generation, success meant having a job. A college diploma was respectable, but they feared it would undermine the traditions of the past, or worse still, family closeness. Like them, my family admired academic learning, but they were also suspicious of it. In Southern Italy higher education had had no place in their rustic culture, and in Brooklyn the fancy ways and polished language of college-educated Americans made them uncomfortable. As for me, going to college was a mixed bag of intellectual excitement and nostalgia, for the ideas and traditions that I cherished were slipping away.

The Catholic grammar school I attended, suitably named for the Biblical John who created the image of the apocalypse, had a reputation that encouraged my parents to pay tuition they could hardly afford. The priests who managed parish affairs were Italians, but the ethnicity of the nuns was a mystery since their surnames had been erased. Ironically, these women, my first teachers, had assumed the names, but not the patience, of saints.

In the 1950's, ecumenical thinking was a thing of the future. With the McCarthy hearings in progress, we were told the difference between good guys and bad guys, who would be saved and who would be damned. Then our classrooms were orderly and quiet. Today elementary education gets kids to arrive at generalizations that apply across sex roles and cultures. Then we learned by rote our teachers' assumptions. When my son Mathew was eight years old, I noticed that his view of the world was expanding. When I was his age, I was reprimanded for questioning why St. Isaac Jacques continued to pursue Indians who resisted conversion: my critical thinking skills were being stifled.

How can the same woman who challenges myths and pursues truth in the classroom be expected to return home and subordinate her ideas and opinions to a husband who cuts off any discussion that makes him feel uncomfortable? My Italian-American marriage did not survive this question.

As a young student, I was somewhat chagrined that Mom, Dad, Dick, Jane, and Spot were not Italian. Although the women in my reading primer were held up as role models because their homes were ordered by feminine patience, sacrifice, and submission, I had no plans to imitate them. In those days we did not read Kate Chopin, Tilly Olsen, Maya Angelou, or Grace Paley. There were no real households for us to relate to in either the present as children or in the future as adults. Trying to preserve custom, the nuns read us stories that showed how innovation and debate resulted in tragedy--Martin Luther, for example, and Anne Hutchinson. A good cautionary tale, so my teachers believed, would prevent the evils brought about by individuation and acculturation.

In college I was awed when a fellow student questioned our professor's rendition of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. What motivated her to criticize what we were being taught? But to my surprise, our instructor welcomed her ideas and conceded certain points he had

previously raised. Was I now free to think for myself? If so, how did I go about it? Wouldn't it get me into trouble? In the sixth grade hadn't Sister Thomas More been quite clear about the dangers of impertinence and willful pride? Did I really want to be "a true daughter of Eve?"

In college I excelled because my essays and exams presented my instructors with written affirmations of their own ideas. Then, in my last semester, a sociology teacher saw through me and threatened to withhold my *A* until I told him what I--not what everyone else--thought about Nietzche's philosophy.

However, thinking for myself became a mixed blessing, for it created the shift in power that eventually caused my marriage to fall apart. How can the same woman who challenges myths and pursues truth in the classroom be expected to return home and subordinate her ideas and opinions to a husband who cuts off any discussion that makes him feel uncomfortable? My Italian-American marriage did not survive this question.

During my many years of graduate school, my husband spoke proudly of my accomplishments, especially in front of other people. In private, he frequently complained that I had become too opinionated, too argumentative. A few weeks before he moved out, he joked that his next wife would be barefoot and bookless.

Now I had a new question: "Where does an Italian-American single mother completing a graduate degree, so crucial an issue in her tenure decision, turn for understanding and support? Most of my family and many old friends waxed nostalgic when my husband and I separated. Knowing less than they thought they did of the obstacles that my education had placed in my marriage, they all but canonized the wonderful cook who had "helped" me clean our house. "What does Maryann want?" was the question they offered with their condolences. Very few of my college friends understood how thoroughly academic values were in conflict with my role as an Italian-American woman. Fearing that they might consider me less than their equal, I grew protective of the very traditions that had undermined my happiness.

As I completed my degree, I often wished that Dick and Jane's mother had gone to graduate school. I needed some role model who had been in the British Museum writing her dissertation while her child was on the other side of the Atlantic in New York. Curiously, I felt like my great-grandfather Orazio crossing an ocean and hoping that *paesani* would be waiting on the other side. But few of the people I met while I wrote my dissertation were women, even fewer were single parents, and no one was Italian-American. I was all three. The string intended for my left thumb bound up my workdays with feelings of guilt, alienation, and fear. The librarian at the University of London, when she asked me where I came from , treated me kindly as I began to cry and babble about how lonely I was away from my son and how I needed to get this work done quickly, or both of us would be in real trouble. "No," I told her, "There was no one at home who knew how to help me through this." "You can't go home until you complete your research for your dissertation. After all," she said, "if you return home without it, what kind of role model will your son have? Someday he will know your story."

I often hear from my Italian-American students how much they enjoy learning and how they look forward to teaching. Using idyllic language, they also speak of the support they receive at home. Everyone is rooting for them, everyone is lending full support. "That's good," I tell them, "when you are struggling with new ideas and ways of improving your writing." But these students rarely say that what they learn in school is being discussed or explained at home with their husbands or families or at any cultural, social, or political events. In that matter, the separateness between the new ideas and the old remains. To what extent, I think, will their learning also separate them from their family traditions?

Today, when I think of my Italian heritage, I think of holiday cooking, cordial hospitality, and family closeness. But I also think of Anne Cornelisen's "women of the shadows" and wonder how long educational deprivation and the Italian ambivalence toward higher education will continue to haunt Italian-American women who brave the uncertain shores of academe.

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columns: "The Best Lies, The Best Liars, and The Best Liees." The result was not an interpretive discussion about the poem as what we might call a "greater appreciation of the human condition" in the abstract but the palpable and painful coming to terms with the social problem of sexual pressure experienced by the girls from their boyfriends, some of whom, as attested to by one of the girls, tell the worst lie--"I love you." Such was the gravity of the unspoken crisis in that instance that the girls in the class ended up proposing the startup of a support group "like Alcoholics Anonymous." *The Globe and Mails*, Toronto, Ontario, October 20, 1992, p. A32. Surely, Percy Bysshe Shelley would be surprised to see this particular context for poets as the unacknowledged legislators of the world. I am not suggesting that this poem not be taught according to a reader-response, and that it has always claimed to have.

26. See Northrop Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of The Bible and Literature* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1990).

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Community, Stereotype, and Insanity: Eliot's *Adam Bede* and Dickens' *Great Expectations*

by Julianne White

A community establishes its mores, its priorities, and even its social problems in the process of defining itself and its parameters. The members of a community essentially agree on definitions of right and wrong, socially acceptable behavior, and the roles the individuals play, usually determined by gender, age, and rank in society. The fact that these roles may be hotly contested by those individual community members does not seem to have much bearing on their existence. In any community, there will be those who rebel, who do not fit in, or who choose to live on the fringes of society.

In addition, the community even comes to a consensus on recognizable stereotypes. Cultures everywhere either contain variations on or can easily recognize "the hen-pecked husband," the "dumb blonde," (or any of its several incarnations, such as "dumb jock" or "the village idiot"), the "court jester," or the "evil landlord." Many of these stereotypes not only cross cultural boundaries but they also persist in their appearance throughout historical periods as well.

Too often, these stereotypes follow along racial and/or gender lines, victimizing women in particular. In a very real sense, insanity itself is a gender stereotype. So many examples of Western literature, art, and music use the image of the hysterical woman that the picture would be laughable if it were not so tragic. The lunacy of *Ophelia* in Hamlet, the agony of any operatic tragic heroine (such as *Madame Butterfly*), and the misery of any artistic madwoman (such as those photographed by Hugh W. Diamond) stand as viable proof of Western society's morbid obsession with hysterical women. And far too many times, Western society has too readily labeled a woman mad because she dares to step out of the narrow role prescribed for her by the patriarchal power structure.

According to today's more enlightened standards, we realize now that very few of the women previously deemed insane were insane at all: these are merely women who responded to the barriers their communities have erected before them with either negative or positive defense mechanisms. How women respond to their community's restrictions informs the observer not only about the strength and resiliency of women in the face of enormous opposition, but also about the community itself.

To examine the position of women in the community of Victorian England, therefore, we use its literature. In George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, for example, the female characters are surprisingly similar in their personality traits, in the actions they take, and in the consequences they face. These female characters (Lisbeth and Mrs. Joe, Hetty and Estella, Dinah and Biddy, Mrs. Poyser and Miss Havisham) represent stereotypes of the women of Victorian England, as well as the variations on how harshly their society judged them, depending on the severity and the manifestation of their deviation from the norm.

In the characters of Lisbeth, from Eliot's work, and Mrs. Joe, from Dickens', the reader sees the obvious stereotype of the scold, the nagging woman, who is never happy with her family's work, behavior, or decisions. The extent to which the other members (both men and women) of their communities tolerate them surprises the modern reader. First of all, Lisbeth is not a very pleasant character. Not only does she favor Adam over Seth, she also has no compunction about this hurtful show of preference. Seth, to his credit, suffers his mother's favorism in dutiful silence. In spite of her obvious preference for Adam, she still does not always approve of Adam's actions or decisions. When Adam comes home from work to find his father has neglected to make the promised coffin, Adam furiously begins to make the coffin himself. Lisbeth scolds Adam for judging his father too harshly:

> 'Thee mun forgie thy feyther--thee munna be so bitter again' him. He war a good feyther to thee afore he took to th' drink. He's a cliver workman, an' taught thee thy trade, remember, an's niver gen me a blow nor so much as all ill work--no not even in's drink.'
>
> Lisbeth's voice became louder, and choked with sobs: a sort of wail, the most irritating of all sounds where real sorrows are to be borne, and real work to be done. (Eliot 85-6)

Since Lisbeth's nagging and scolding is really just an outward form of worry--worry about her son's welfare, her husband's drinking problem, her family's future and happiness--Adam and Seth (and the rest of their community) endure her emotional outbursts. Adam does worry about Lisbeth's reaction to his engagement to Hetty, but he steels himself to endure the battle and eventually prevails. The community all know that Lisbeth is difficult to please, but they only sympathize with Adam and Seth, without casting Lisbeth out of their midst. The final outcome, that of Adam's marriage to Dinah, is convenient as well as the perfect solution to the problem of satisfying a woman notoriously difficult to satisfy.

Of the two women, Mrs. Joe is the more terrible scold. Nothing either Pip or Joe does is right. Pip even performs the most outrageously inconvenient deed of surviving, requiring looking after "by hand." Mrs. Joe constantly makes Pip pay a heavy toll for this imposition. She treats Pip as if his very presence keeps her from enjoying the fruits of her (and Joe's) labor. Pip recalls:

> I was always treated as if I had insisted on being born, in opposition to the dictates of reason, religion, and

> morality, and against the dissuading arguments of my best friends. Even when I was taken to have a new set of clothes, the tailor had orders to make them like a kind of reformatory, and on no account to let me have the free use of my limbs. (Dickens 54)

She even inhibits the design of Pip's clothes, as if the "free use of [his] limbs" would release Pip also from the obligation of the gratitude he owes her for taking him in and providing him with food, shelter, clothing, and education.

Joe too suffers under Mrs. Joe's nagging tongue. Once, he goes so far as to hide the size of a slice of bread that he shares with Pip, fearing her disapproval. However, Joe's own upbringing (with a mother who was regularly battered by Joe's brutally violent father) provides the reason he so easily tolerates Mrs. Joe's abuse. He explains it best himself to Pip:

> 'I see so much in my poor mother, of a woman drudging and slaving and breaking her honest hart and never getting no peace in her mortal days, that I'm dead afeerd of going wrong in the way of not doing what's right by a woman, and I'd fur rather of the two go wrong the t'other way, and be little ill-conwenienced myself. I wish it was only me that got put out, Pip: I wish there warn't no Tickler for you, old chap; I wish I could take it all on myself; but this is the up-and-down-and-straight on it, Pip, and I hope you'll overlook shortcomings.' (Dickens 80)

Joe shows remarkable understanding and true sacrifice (as opposed to melodramatic martyrdom) for a man of no education or refinement. By anyone's standards, he is an honorable man for persevering in his choice of roads to take with Mrs. Joe. It is to Joe that Pip owes the gratitude demanded by his sister. And yet, in spite of all of Mrs. Joe's shortcomings, everyone in town admires her for undertaking the raising of Pip "by hand" and her skill at managing Pip, Joe, the house, and the forge. After the brutal attack by Orlick, her condition elicits sympathy and compassion from everyone in the community. When Pip comes into his expectations, everyone regards Pip's good fortune as a direct result of Mrs. Joe's arranging for Pip to entertain Miss Havisham. All in all, the townspeople consider Pip a lucky young man, "selected" for raising by Mrs. Joe. In spite of their negative depictions by both Eliot and Dickens, neither Lisbeth nor Mrs. Joe are deemed insane by their respective communities or even remotely odd or different. In fact, in spite of their one-dimensionality, it seems as if these depictions were not intended by their respective authors to be negative. Indeed, they rather seem to suggest that part of a woman's essential nature is to nag, since she must carry the weight of the responsibility of the welfare of others.

Just as the characters of Lisbeth and Mrs. Joe parallel each other, so Hetty and Estella also share many of the same characteristics. They are both extremely beautiful, and both lack any sort of inner life at all. Although Eliot provides the reader with an omniscient narrator who *would* show the reader Hetty's inner thought (if she had any worth reading), Dickens' narrator is Pip, who is totally consumed with his own assumptions, and is therefore not the best judge of Estella's thoughts or desires. Even so, their respective authors portray Hetty and Estella as "vain, coquettish, [and] materialistic," according to Michael Squires in his 1974 work *The Pastoral Novel: Studies in George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence* (59). In Estella's case, she even appears calculating in her quest to marry well (perhaps as a consequence of her tutelage under Miss Havisham).

The worst one can say about Hetty, though, is that she is incredibly naive to believe for one second that Arthur will actually marry her. (In fact, Hetty's dream of marrying Arthur strains the reader's credulity, for one would presume that Hetty's upbringing in a society so steeped in class distinctions would preclude her unrealistic expectations.) Like Effie in Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, both Hetty and Estella share the foible of excessive vanity and self-centeredness. Also, Hetty and Estella are the objects of unrealistic marital expectations on the parts of Adam and Pip. Both Adam and Pip assume feelings that do not exist from Hetty and Estella; Hetty and Estella are as unreachable as Arthur is for Hetty. Adam and Pip must suffer their losses, even though both of them never really "had" the women of their dreams to begin with. And, also like Effie, Hetty pays the consequence of imprisonment, and Estella pays the price of a marriage to a brute.

In addition, according to Squires, Hetty is an important contrast to Dinah (and by extension, here, Estella contrasts with Biddy in the same way). Hetty is the moral opposite of Dinah (or, as suggested by Knoepflmacher, Dinah's "incomplete half...[which] must remain undeveloped and incomplete, must be made to suffer" [283]). Squires believes that Hetty's "self-centeredness results in insensitivity to the problems of others, and her character flaw is therefore her lack of sympathy" (59). The same could easily be said of Estella and her lack of sympathy to Pip. The parallels between the two characters in two novels lend credence to the idea that Hetty and Estella (as well as Scott's Effie) represent a certain stereotype recognizable to Victorian society, that of the giddy, vain, shallow, ornamental woman--characteristics which would usually have direct bearing on her mental stability as well.

In addition to the similarities between Lisbeth/Mrs. Joe and Hetty/Estella, points of comparison may be noted between Dinah and Biddy, who represent another stereotype, that of the selfless, patient caretaker. Each woman plays the role of nurturer. Dinah comes to the village of Hayslope to care for the souls there with her preaching. In the process, she also cares for Lisbeth's emotional and spiritual needs during her time of bereavement. In the novel Dinah, according to Jay Clayton in his *Romantic Vision and the Novel*, "helps restore a new order... helps illumine an invisible

world..[and] marks the place where the visible world ends" (151). This is quite a role to play indeed. Biddy comes to the Gargery household to care for the incapacitated Mrs. Joe after Orlick's vicious attack. In the process, she winds up caring for Joe and Pip as well, affording them the tenderness and genuine caring so long denied them by the scold, (now her charge), Mrs. Joe. Neither community harshly judges these women.

True, Dinah's call to the ministry was unusual for a woman to risk undertaking. However, when questioned by Rev. Irwine, her call seems genuine to him. The good reverend, who represents the patriarchal establishment, gives her evangelism his stamp of approval. As maintained by Shirley Foster in *Victorian Women's Fiction: Marriage, Freedom and the Individual*, Dinah is "far from being a rebel against traditional womanliness" and indeed "represents in many way the perfection of her sex" (201). Foster continues:

> [Dinah's] feminine delicacy, 'modest demeanour, and simple...candid...gravely loving expression' make her saint-like, and she is regarded as an angel or a Madonna by those whom she helps. But her femininity is deficient in one important respect; believing that she has been divinely called, she has put aside her innermost needs as a woman in favour of serving others. (201)

The nurturing of souls is only a natural extension of a woman's role of motherhood, after all, and the end of the novel, with Dinah giving up her ministry to tend to her own family, seems to suggest that perhaps Dinah had been misreading her call all along. But, as stated by Foster, "because her aberration has not destroyed her inherent warmth of spirit, Dinah is not chastised.... Instead, she is brought to the perfection of complete womanhood" (202) when she marries Adam and lays aside her ministry.

Biddy is instrumental in Pip's early education, though, teaching him when Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt, "that preposterous female" (Dickens 136), could teach him no more. Biddy not only teaches Pip his academics, she also teaches him true humility (as opposed to enforced obligation), respect for Joe, thankfulness form simplicity, and the true meaning of friendship. Estella shows Pip how to feel "common and coarse"; with Biddy, Pip always feels relaxed and accepted for himself. Estella (and all she represents) makes Pip feel ashamed of Joe and his humble beginnings at the forge. In her saintly ministrations to Mrs. Joe, Biddy shows Pip patience and kindness. The contrast between Biddy and Estella and the one-dimensional aspect of both their character, suggest Dickens' utilizes these two instantly recognizable stereotypes as the means by which he fully develops the character of Pip, his main focus. In addition, the one aspect of the characters of Dinah and Biddy which contrasts so intensely with the characters of Hetty and Estella is their selflessness. Hetty and Estella are so thoroughly self-absorbed, that when they receive the wrath of their communities, it is actually for being egotistical, an unforgivable crime for a woman to commit. Dinah and Biddy, self-sacrificing to the end, receive no such wrath.

Certainly Biddy's selfless nursing of Mrs. Joe is not the least bit strange; even though Hayslope looks upon Dinah's ministerial ambitions with suspicion, they still do not think her eccentric or insane, mainly because of the maternal compassion which marked her ministry. Dickens' Miss Havisham, however, is a different case. Here is a character who is more completely self-absorbed even than her protegée, Estella. The only aspect of Miss Havisham's character which resembles Eliot's Mrs. Poyser is that both are the benefactors of young women: Miss Havisham for Estella and Mrs. Poyser for Hetty. In fact, Mrs. Poyser has elements of the stereotype of the scold (mentioned earlier), for her nitpicking of Hetty's work on the dairy farm. However, she harps with an edge of love in her voice, as Hetty is her niece and she does her work in the dairy well. Mrs. Poyser takes Hetty under her wing and teaches her all the secrets of successful dairy farming; she plans to marry Hetty to Adam with a grand show of maternal affection and a good luck cedar chest full of handmade linens and lace. She teaches Hetty how to make a home for her husband. Hetty's predicament sorely embarrasses and perplexes her, and she worries about the consequences her family will face as a result of Hetty's fall from grace. There is much of Lisbeth and Mrs. Joe about Mrs. Poyser, with the added dividend of teacher/benefactor. The community widely hails Mrs. Poyser as a woman who does all she can for her young charge, and in spite of all her wisdom, must endure the ungrateful vagaries of a silly, crazy, empty-headed girl.

Miss Havisham, though, desires that Estella make up for her mistake of trusting a man. Miss Havisham deliberately allows Pip to deceive himself into believing that she is his benefactor and that she intends to turn Pip into a gentleman, making him a suitable match for her precious Estella. True, much of this scenario comes from Pip's own imagination and aspirations, but Miss Havisham does not correct any of Pip's outrageous notions. She never really communicates with Pip; she merely sends for him, he amuses her briefly, and she sends him away again.

Satis House, where time stands still and rats feast on mouldy wedding cake, represents great power: power that comes from wealth, status (or rank), and the freedom to live as one likes. The community indulges Miss Havisham's eccentricities as one indulges the whims of a precious child who would surely perish dreadfully if everyone of her whims were not satisfied. They see her weird clinging to the past as justifiable, given the circumstances of her abandonment by a charlatan. Had Miss Havisham been merely insane, with no episode in her past to explain her insanity, or had she been poor, like Molly (Estella's mother, Magwitch's jilted wife, and Jaggers' maid), the community probably would not have been so tolerant. Miss Havisham is the one

character among all these examples who could rightly be called insane, even by today's standards; and yet, she is not ostracized or chastised in any way by her community. Because she removes herself from intercourse with the community, she therefore relieves them of the burden and responsibility of having to cast her out. Since they do not reject her company, they are not to blame for her withdrawal from them. Without the albatross of blame, they can allow her the right to be bizarre. And bizarre she most certainly is.

The human community continues to accept these stereotypes of women--the nagging scold, the vain ornament, the selfless saint, and the idiosyncratic eccentric--as basic personality types, and it continues to place some of its members in these categories. It also persists in judging (sometimes harshly) the women who do not fit the mold. In 1978 when the United Methodist Church ordained my mother as a deacon (and one year later as an Elder), the women at the church we had attended regularly since 1961 claimed outrage and sacrilege. Some even suggested that my mother had lost her senses. (The men, however, displayed remarkable magnanimity, reminding one of the good Re. Irwine.) Every church which has received her as its pastor bristled at the idea of its flock being tended by a woman. Their eventual acceptance of her comes about as a result of their realizing her uniqueness as a person and the genuineness of her call to the ministry (as opposed to Dinah's "misreading" hers). Since the community not only recognizes stereotypes but also defines them by consensus, they remain. In George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Miss Havisham and Mrs. Poyser, Biddy and Dinah, Estella and Hetty, and Mrs. Joe and Lisbeth Bede, represent certain stereotypical images of women in the community of Victorian England. They serve not just the literary functions of characterization, of "buffers" between characters, or as figurative "mirrors" through which main characters (and by extension readers) "see" themselves. They also serve as mirrors to show a community to itself.

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Cinderella Plays the Palace

"My foot ain't gonna wear
No glass slipper, honey."
That's what I said
This stud comes drivin' up
In a big white hog.
Out he prances and smiles
Like butter won't melt in his mouth
And talk--that boy could talk
He wants to tell me his life story
All 'bout his momma and daddy wantin'
Him to get married.
All 'bout his long lost love.
"Shee-it," I said, "I am
A workin' girl, honey.
I ain't got time to stand here
And listen to this shit."
Then he hauls out this
Glass stilleto heeled open toe number
Sittin' on this cute little satin pillow.
"No kinky stuff, honey.
I don't do no kinky stuff."
But no, he says.
He only wants me to try the damn thing on
'Cause if it fits
He gonna take care of me
And take me to the palace
And feed me bon-bons
And I won't never have
To work no more.
Talk, they all talk, honey.
And I've heard that shit before
And I figured what kind of schmuck
Needs to find his woman by her shoe size.
"I am a *working* girl, honey,
And that will be ten dollars.
Dance what do you *mean*
You want me to dance?
For that, honey, I charge extra."

Happily Ever After

Borin' honey, I mean it was real borin'
You know. He takes me home
To meet his folks and I come
Hobblin' in on one glass shoe
Like a lame horse and he says
"Father, I have found her at last!"
All kinds, honey, you work this
Street, you meet all kinds
But these people were un-bee-lievable.
No teevee. They ain't got no teevee.
Great big house like that
You'd a thunk they'd a had a teevee.
But they're out a touch, you know.
Sit around on their asses all day long
And name their son, Charming--
I kid you not, babe, that was his
Name--Not Fred, or Stan, or Gus--
Charming--they was dippier than he was.
Do? I changed clothes a lot for thrills
Honey, there wasn't nothin' else to do.
If I'd a wanted that, I'd a signed on
At Madame Rosa's or one of them
Fancy places up on the North Shore.
I like walkin' honey, keeps the
Old pins in shape, and a girl's
Gotta have her self respect,
You know what I mean, Honey?
So I split.

by Karen Fulton

KAREN UITVLUGT FULTON is an Associate Professor of English and coordinator of the Writing Placement Examination at Missouri Western State College.

Bitch Goddess in Academia: Restructuring the Canon at Norman Mailer University

by Maria Bruno

> The critic does not like the idea of women writers, does not believe women can be writers, and hence does not see them even when they are right before their eyes.
>
> Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood"

> Only ideological commitment could have gotten us to enter the minefield, putting in jeopardy our careers and our livelihood.
>
> Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through the Minefield"

> He drew first blood.
>
> Rambo

Okay, so I'm back--the resurrected Bitch Goddess in academe. I lost my old job to budget cuts and I got desperate, so I took this job at Norman Mailer University in upstate New York. Yeah, I know he's a sexist and stabbed his second wife, and he said women couldn't be real writers because the were made to have babies, and he said a real writer needs to have balls, and I know I've even made jokes about him. Like the one about how I think *The Naked and the Dead* is the way he likes his women...but it was either this, teaching graduate courses in American literature, or that standing offer from Moosehead, Alabama, teaching five sections of remedial composition five days a week to Animal Science Majors. So here I am and I need this job. I'm in the same tasteful tailored suit I always wear to interviews and the first days of anything with the silk bow collared blouse, taupe pumps, my face sculpted to perfection in a modest beige make-up base; I want to appear rational, competent, scholarly---not shrill.

I'm not sure I want to appear younger or older, so I decide on a respectable middle-aged stance, whatever that is, and I wait for the meeting to begin.

I look around the room. There are antlers on the walls, lots of old white men sitting around a thick mahogany table. I feel like an intruder, like I've snuck into a meeting of the Order of the Most Solemn Elk. They eye me suspiciously. They know I am a token, a sacrificial lamb thrown into the den of academia to teach "all those older women graduate students coming back to school." That's at least what they told me in my interview where they spoke of these older women as if they were dilettantes--as if their late-in-life graduate program was as serious as an enrichment course in ceramics, flower arranging, microwave cookery.

I recognize there is a distinct pressure for studying female authors and hiring women professors to do so, and I feel safe in this knowledge for the time being. I want to tell them that I am committed to the idea that literature can renew our lives---yet literature just isn't pulling the students in anymore. During my interview, one white-haired professor who was wearing one of those thin Fifties ties my dad used to wear to funerals, told me that one of those "older women" had the nerve to tell him reading post-Sixties male writers was like watching *Porky's I & II* over and over again. "These aren't my stories," he said she announced to the class. "This isn't even my language!" So they hired me, I guess, to "give these gals what they want." That way they don't have to give up their forever allegiance to post-adolescent male characters who are on the run, on the road, or on the make.

I want to ask them why they think people weren't finding their heroes in literature anymore, that maybe the standard canon had exhausted itself, that maybe literature as presented and taught just wasn't accessible to most students. This generation's heroes are video mega-heroes: Rambo trudging through a Thai jungle, muscles gleaming, a magazine of bullets glistening across a Nautilus chest; a pre-verbal Arnold Schwarzenegger, thigh-necked and swarthy, playing Conan the REpublican with total recall, a silk shorted Rocky Balboa who isn't allowed to die even after four sequels. I often liken these video heroes to the established literary canon; after a steady diet of them I hunger for a Meryl Streep, a Sissy Spacek, a Whoopi Goldberg. The established literary canon does not tell everyone's stories, does not speak everyone's language, and maybe that "older woman" student is right--women students can't attach to forever juvenile male characters who feel post-modern angst and who run, hit the road, hop in and out of suburban swimming pools, and lose themselves in fleshy aim-to-please women. We saw through these guys years ago. They bore us. We want our own stories.

"Clit lit," snickers a reasonably young professor who's sitting under some large antlers in a corner.

"What are you afraid of?" I hear a little voice inside of me say. She's pretty quiet today. It's my Bitch Goddess and she knows I want this job. I've nicknamed her--like any good feminist critic would do--my "covert sub-text." She's underneath, straight from the wild zone, giving me a running commentary on my life.

"Harumph-h-h," phlegms up a full professor. He comes over and sits next to me. " I hope you've been reading a lot of Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan," he lectures. "They're very big around here. They've given us whole new avenues of study." He says this like they're the next best thing to Vitamin E and pre-dawn jogging.

"I have read them," I say. "But lately I've spent my time reading Kolodny, Hooks, Baym, Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar." No phlegm in my throat--I say their names like clear bells ringing. He looks at me matter-of-factly, like I have rattled off a guest list to a neighborhood Tupperware party.

"Oh, yes, Gilbert Anne Gubar," he sniffs. "Isn't she that gal out of Princeton?"

"How bad do you want this job?" comes the voice

straight from the wild zone. I'll forgive him, I say; he's old, he somebody's grandpa. I say nothing. I'm getting prepared. I have my syllabus under wraps. I've reconstructed one of their traditional courses in American literature. The meeting doesn't start. I guess we're waiting for someone or something.

There is suddenly a grand silence, a calm before a giant storm. All straighten their books and click their pens. I feel for a moment I can hear distant trumpets. Norman Mailer flourishes in wearing a tan safari suit, looking a lot like Bwana Don Corleone, the great white Godfather. He looks rugged, virile, boyishly attractive--and for a moment, I forget my speech. I forget I want to tell him his stories are not my stories, his language is male, his concept of universal literature denies fifty-percent of the population whose experiences are different, who have, as Adrienne Rich argues, lived enforced lives inside a patriarchal culture and a patriarchal language.

"So you're the little lady we hired to take on those pushy graduate students," Mailer laughs, his teeth large and white in his mouth. He says every word like it should be italicized and I suddenly remember my booklist tucked neatly in my valise. "I've never taken much to women writers," he says, eyeing me. "I can't read them."

"The more you read, the better you'll get at it," I say politely, staring at the brass buttons on the Bwana Don suit. ("After all, we've had to read all of you all these years," she hisses. She's quiet again. She's thinking of Moosehead, Alabama, and the Animal Science majors. She settles down and watches him.)

"You must remember, though," he says, crossing his legs like a real Sicilian. "You can't throw out years of literature and culture. You have to remember who the important writers are."

I look at him. He's not going to like my syllabus, I think.The Bitch Goddess begins to move. I can feel her stretch inside of me. ("Are they important because you tell me they're important?" she whispers.) I feel her crawling up my throat.

"Something is missing from that cultural history," I say, she says, I'm not sure anymore. "The lives, the stories, the rhythms of half of humanity."

There I've said it.

There is silence.

"You're like Erica Jong," he says glibly, winking. "You're both cute when you get angry."

"That's it," she says. "It's all over. He drew First Blood. "

Suddënly I startle everyone, including myself. I feel heroic as hell. Things begin to whirl about me. I rip open my tasteful tailored suit and reveal a diagonal line of silver bullets slung across my bosom with the name of every woman writer shut out of literary history engraved on each and every one. My muscles bulge, my skin glistens. I jump on the table, my syllabus in hand; I feel strong, energized. Mailer freezes. It looks like it's Moosehead, Alabama, for me. But I feel good. I can rescue prisoners of war from a Thai jungle, match neck-to-neck Arnold Schwarzenegger's verbal prowess, and ride the plains bareback. Yo, Adrian.

I am suddenly Everywoman, real and fictional. I am Susannah Rowson, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, Kate Chopin, Zora Neal Hurston, Alice Walker. I am Lily, Celie, Isadora Wing. I am my one grandmother who worked the spinnies in a Pennsylvania mill, and the other who pulled fevers out of sick babies with her gentle hands. I am that gal from Princeton and that gal from Indiana.

"Please, please, Miss DiPrima, you're wrinkling my epaulets," Mailer cries. I awake from my daze. I'm shaking his shoulders, calling him Norm, looking for knives. The Bitch Goddess is standing tall, no longer crouching in silence.

"Please sit down," he says, "and pass out your syllabus."

When everyone has a copy--Mr. Clit Lit, Jacques "You Really Want One Don't You?" Lacan, the guy who's somebody's grandpa, and every other Most Solemn Elk who hasn't changed his syllabus in 25 years---I pause. There is an awkward silence. Norm seems to be fixating on some antlers looming above my head; Jacques fidgets, and the grandpa seems to be thinking gleefully ahead to my tenure review, mentally booking me a Super Saver to Moosehead. I want everyone in this room to know that feminist literary criticism is not narrow and reductive. It is expansive. It is life affirming. It is revisionary thinking. It breaks silences. It tells stories that have never been told but have longed to be told. I look around me. I see cigar smoke curling around a terra cotta sculpture of Cotton Mather, a framed glossy of the Big Two Hearted River on the wall, three unabridged Melvilles stacked in the center of the table. I rearrange my books, fanning them out into the shape of an eagle's wing. I clear my throat. I hear a palpable silence. I'm thinking about all the women students who want to be writers--poets, novelists, essayists--women who will come to this university who are unable to find any role models to guide them, who have stories to tell, but who may never tell them. I think of all their future silences and then I figure this silence isn't so bad. I take a deep breath and begin.

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Continued from page 4.

many garbs. Our commonality is our function as professionals and lives as part of the incredibly diverse group perceiving patterns we are learning to name and (hope to) alter.

I used this space to draw on Women's Studies as a resource for *WILLA*. This new journal and new assembly will be a resource for Women's Studies as English and Language Arts professionals form epistemic community as feminists. We already recognize that the study of literature helped to bring the women's movement into the academy. I believe that teachers' resistance to totalizing theories will bring powerful resources into the women's movement as well.

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CALL FOR PAPERS for the forth issue of *WILLA*, the journal of the NCTE Women in Literature and Life Assembly: The editors encourage varied perspectives, formats, and voices. Contributions should focus on the status and the image of women. Contributions might include critical essays, teaching strategies for all levels, bibliographies, personal essays, and other creative works. Each should be no more than twelve double-spaced, typed pages. Three copies of the submissions should be sent. Include word count and a self-addressed envelope to which stamps are clipped. Please use MLA style. Author's name and institutional affiliation should not appear on the manuscript. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged promptly if a self-addressed, stamped card or envelope is included. Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is April 30, 1995. Mail to: *WILLA*, Jo Gillikin, Editor, 380 Riverside Drive, 37, New York, New York 10025.

WILLA

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From the Editors

To publish the third issue of *WILLA* is a triumph in that these days getting past one issue of any publication is significant. To hang in there for three issues with the assurance of more to come bespeaks a commitment and dedication that only a cause can create. To improve and empower girls and women in literature and in life is necessarily to make everyone's life better, for English, as we speak it, read it, write it, and cherish it, involves and teaches us all. There is significance in the designation--Mother Tongue.

Moreover, it becomes increasingly clear that the early years are extremely crucial to the development of a sense of self and the placement of that self in community of knowledge with others. Indeed, if our columnists' anecdotal accounts are as true for you as they are for them, then it may be time to reconsider single-sex schools, something most of us would reluctantly do. But questions persist: Do the sexes, in the adolescent years, when placed in the same schools together so distract one another that neither sex can perform as well as it should? If the sexes stay together in classrooms during those crucial teen years, what can be cone to further respect and appreciation for each sex? Are single-sex classes, say in math and in science, another way to proceed? Can an educational environment successfully compete with media and peer influence? These queries lead to other all-important questions--what is knowledge, who creates it, does it exist in its own right, what if there are knowledges some don't want to learn, can knowledge compete with one another, e.g., is knowledge about sports the same as knowledge about history or women's contributions? What knowledge(s) do we value and why? Heady questions, but is seems that we are daily being forced to consider them.

As our interview with Kate Swift and Casey Miller shows, language is the chief way we communicate with one another, and if that language is biased, as they aptly demonstrate in their two books *Words and Women* and *The Nonsexist Guidelines to the English Language*, then we should address that issue on all fronts and in the earliest stages possible. Of particular note in the interview is the fact that the two authors are not acadmicians but women writers who, recognizing the importance of sexist language, set about gathering material to prove its reality and to change it. Our education(s) may/should come from everyone who is knowledgeable. In this vein, we are pleased to note that seven members of *WILLA* participated in the first ever international conference, entitled Global Conversations on Language and Literacy, sponsored by National Council of English, The National Writing Project, Department of Defense Dependent Schools, and The National Association for the Teaching of English (England) which was held at Oxford University this past summer. The seven *WILLA* members spoke on various aspects of Gender Issues in the Teaching of Reading and Writing, a session that will be lengthened to an all-day meeting in Orlando this November.

For the first time, *WILLA* is pleased to offer book reviews because they succinctly summarize key issues that we wish to address, e.g. what texts help to bolster knowledge and self-esteem (*Weaving in the Women*: Transforming the High School English Curriculum); what impedes the equal education of girls (*Failing at Fairness:* How America's Schools Cheat Girls); what changes need to be made in theories and discussions (*Re-educating the Imagination*); and what NCTE women presidents have accomplished (*Missing Chap-ters*).

We also present Sullivan's essay "Feminist and (Other?) Pleasures" which analyzes what went right and wrong in a class when it discussed popular works from a feminist perspective. Feminism and pleasure, let us hasten to emphasize, don't automatically go hand in hand. Elouise Bell's "Beauty and the Best" creatively discourses upon the risks of the divided self. Jacqueline Olson Padgett analyzes another division--the secular and the religious--and Carol L. Winkelmann the dichotomy of personal and professions.

"Bearing Witness" by Martha Marinara, is *WILLA's* first short story. It interestingly presents the problem of an educator (the mother) who knows more about life and death than she can reveal to her young sons who need to travel with some modicum of hope, just as the mother does, although in the adult world that hope is not so readily obtained.

Other selections include personal essays by Barbara Dreher ("It's a Long Lane That Has No Turning") and Deborah Straw ("The Little Details of Our Lives") and a response to "Teaching Ain't No Joke," an earlier personal essay in *WILLA*. *WILLA* continues to publish poetry, and happily we include poems by Andrena Zawinski, Kathleen S. Rohr, and Donna Decker, our new poetry editor.

We gratefully acknowledge the special editors, peer reviewers, contributors, printing staff, the *WILLA* Executive Board, the National Council of Teachers of English, and all those who make possible this publication.

Jo Gilkes

Joan Kolman Johnson

Early Childhood and Elementary Editor
Vicki Silver Zack

A recent article in our local Montreal newspaper *The Gazette* dealt with private all-girls' schools, and the journalist claimed that these schools cater to the way girls learn, that is, incollaborative ways. I teach at a co-ed elementary school (at the Grade 5 level), and my immediate response was that we at out school do indeed nurture that kind of learning, for **all** our constituents. Later that year, at a workshop session on gender issues (led by Fran Davis and Arlene Steiger), one of the teachers from the very school which was prominently featured in the *Gazette* article maintained that the girls in her school often align themselves with the masculinist philosophy: competitive, closed, exclusive--only room at the top for the elite. Feminist pedagogy has much to offer all people, male and female. Living and learning in a community is about caring and about relationships. A sense of community, the nurturing of a positive, caring spirit in the classroom, school and neighborhood, and a push for democracy is where we ought all to be heading.

With a view to heightening awareness among elementary school teachers, a *WILLA* committee is currently working on a list of suggested readings for a gender-balanced curriculum, Pre-School to grade 6. This list will complement the *WILLA Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12*. The challenge is to find books of excellent calibre which will touch hearts and expand horizons, and will reflect come of the issues of concern to feminist educators. As Sandra Bradford DeCosta asked in a recent column in her role as *WILLA* Early Childhood and Elementary Editor, frustrated at the passive image of girls and women in recent movies: "Where are the bright, industrious, brave, thinking young girls" needed as role models? (p. 4).

Perhaps we might consider updating the list of children's books and professional resources often (is every two years too ambitious an aim?), for there are sure to be additions worthy of inclusion, and suggestions of titles that we will have overlooked. Had the list been published last year (1993) for example, books such as the McKissacks' *Sojourner truth: Ain't I a Woman?*, Lyons' *Letters from a Slave Girl*, Freedman's *Eleanor Roosevelt*, and the soon to be published *Cleopatra*, by Stanley, could not have been included. In an inspiring talk at the recent IRA conference in Toronto, Diane Stanley spoke about the image of Cleopatra as seductress through the ages, whereas the truth is that she led an army as massive as that of Alexander the Great, and she triumphed, world history would have been drastically different. Recently there was reference as well to Cleopatra in *Harper's Bazaar* of all places, when a reviewer of Ackerman's book *A Natural History of Love* (Bloom, 1994) stated that "Ackerman [writes] about the monarch Cleopatra, convincing us that she was a political powerhouse (Margaret Thatcher's psyche making brilliant use of Iman's beauty and Josephine Baker's stagecraft)-but love had little to do with it" (p. 90).

When you see the booklist, please keep track of titles too good to miss which you feel ought to be included in an updated *WILLA* booklist for a gender-balanced curriculum; please send the suggestions to us. It is vital for us to hear from you, the classroom teachers and school and community librarians, who have had the opportunity to see which books resonate. We also encourage you to write for *WILLA*, to speak of professional and personal experiences in the classroom and outside the classroom, experiences which are of import to us in the multiple roles which we play.

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Secondary Editor
Barbara A. Schaffner

Previously in this column, I have expressed concern for the young women of high school age who face many problems usually thought to trouble only grown women. although that concern should not be considered solved, it is heartening to report that some progress has been made.

Recently a former student of mine told me that she had broken up with her boyfriend. Instead of crying, she told me how much happier she was now that she no longer tolerated his or anybody else's behavior. Granted that is only one instance, but one more young woman has taken a stand against what might be considered an "adult" problem. On graduation day she was a confident young woman ready to take up the next phase of her life.

Another insight into the minds of high school juniors came in a classroom discussion of Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour." As the students analyzed the state of the Mallard marriage and the cause of Mrs. Mallard's death, both male and female students commented on the roles of the partners in marriage. It was refreshing to hear "teen age" adults advocating a loving partnership rather than a loss of freedom.

As the end of the school year approached, I spoke to some of the graduating seniors about their plans for September, 1994. When one young woman told me she was enrolled at McGill University, I was reminded of Lynn Butler-Kisber's *WILLA* presentation about a study on improved campus safety--better lighting, more phones, and a general awareness among students as to improved safety practices. It was encouraging to know that one of my students and all of the other freshmen would be benefitting from this university's awareness of another problem high school women face as they leave home to continue their education.

Each of these incidents is a small but positive step for high school women.

College Editor
Driek Zirinsky

When I think back over the past year, it seems that American women in language and literature have had a good year, most significantly the Nobel Prize given to Toni Morrison. Despite the prize, many secondary schools in my area have qualms about teaching Morrison's work because of "language" and the open female sexuality in her novels. I have hopes that winning the Nobel Prize will push Morrison into canonical status and that the prize will provide support for teachers who want to teach Morrison in high schools. One of the teachers at my research site surveyed her student's independent reading practices and found that despite the practice of "books of choice" units-a time in the curriculum when students can select their own literature-few students were selecting female authors. The apparent reason was that these young readers didn't know about female authors they might select, and often their teachers didn't know which books to recommend to them.

However, for some of the school boards in my area it will make no difference, and Morrison will join the ranks of celebrated American writers who are overtly and covertly censored. On my campus, several young women have

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Beauty and the Beast--Wedding Still Pending: Male-Female Integration in the Legendary Fable

by Elouise Bell

Fairy tales serve our culture as far more than stories to amuse children. Carl Jung, Bruno Bettleheim, and Steven Sondheim (by means of *Into the Woods*) help us understand that storybook characters from Peter Pan to Cinderella tell us about ourselves and our inner lives. They are worth revisiting. Like the central figures of literary masterpieces, like our own friends and family, the characters in fairy tales offer new insights every time we return to them, see their images in our minds, muse anew over their mysteries.

I had heard the story of Beauty and the Beast for years. The recent Disney movie prompted me to search out a video of Renoir's black and white classic for comparison. (Seeing this film, Greta Garbo, herself a myth, reputedly said at the end, when the Beast becomes just another Handsome Prince, "Gif me back my Beast.") I even bought a picture-book version of the tale.

Like the central figures of literary masterpieces, like our own friends and family, the characters in fairy tales offer new insights every time we return to them, see their images in our minds, muse anew over their mysteries.

The standardly accepted insight of the story is, of course, that appearances are deceptive. But from my latest reading, I had an entirely new experience with Beauty and the Beast, seeing a *new* slant on the old tale.

I began to examine the tale as a dramatization, a mythic depiction, of the identity challenges encountered by young women today. This time around, instead of seeing Beauty and her Beast as two different entities, I looked at them as two halves of one individual, and in particular, of the young woman. It may be illuminating to reflect on Beauty and the Beast as symbolic of conflicting gifts that young women may claim or may leave *un*claimed. We use a variety of labels for this cosmic and universal dichotomy of gifts: yin and yang, heart and mind, animus and anima, intuition and cognition, the female and the male principles. Whatever the terms, we know that as human beings, we are born with the full set of potentialities--with right and left brains, with the capacity for logic and for intuition, for action and for receptivity.

Beauty, you remember, got her name because she was quintessentially lovely and kind. And life goes well for Beauty as long as her father's home is blessed with wealth. but when the Wheel of Fortune take a downward turn, life becomes more difficult, and Beauty finds herself the drudge of the family, working hard in the fields while her two sisters grumble and weep.

When her father journeys to the seaport in hopes of retrieving part of his former fortune, beauty asks only that he bring her a rose. She longs for a rose because the farm now yields only cabbages, which feed the body but not the soul, the creative impulse. However, Father's hopes are dashed; apparently neither Beauty nor the patriarchy can return to the past, A storm drives Father to seek refuge in the Beast's palace, where he receives from his unseen host all the comforts ordinarily offered by Beauty. A fire awaits, as well as a sumptuous meal, a comfortable bed, fine garments to replace his soaked clothes. Thus, from the beginning, the Beast mirrors Beauty, in what they have to offer to the father and to the world.

Before riding off in the morning, Father picks a rose. The Beast, unseen til now, appears, enraged and fearsome. In one version of the tale, Beast says, "How dare you harm my roses? A rose that's cut can only die."

Beauty wants a rose to feed her soul. But *separate* the rose from its roots, and death results. This key line speaks to the consequences of separation and alienation within ourselves. For cutting the rose, for this separation, says the Beast, Father must die. Today, philosophers, psychotherapists, and educators, from Marion Woodman to Thomas Moore, warn that our culture is threatened by separation, at the mercy of the animus, the aggressive force, the mind-powers without a soul. They insist on the urgency for the individual and the society of integrating anima and animus, mind and soul, justice and mercy. In the fairy tale, even as he decrees justice, Beast offers a merciful solution to this separation of mind and soul: Father *will* be spared if one of his daughters will come to live with the Beast.

When Beauty and her father return to the palace as promised, Beauty greets the Beast with the words, "Good evening, my lord."

"Good evening," replies the Beast. "But do not call me 'my lord,' for I am a beast and you must call me so." The beast--the cognitive powers, the left-brain talents, the male principle, call it what you will--has long dwelt in the palace and held the dominant position. Throughout the centuries in our culture, in men and in women, this side of us has commanded the lion's share of attention, admiration, encouragement, and resources. It has been enthroned; it has ruled. But there seems to be an irony: that palace has been a prison, and that half-

life a beastly life, just as Beauty's half-life has been impoverished. The Beast rules the palace, but he is still a beast. And he knows the truth.

As Beauty begins her life in the palace, she discovers herself to be strangely at home. The picture book version say, "Each [room] provided a delightful new entertainment for her, *as if her tastes were already known*." [italics added] Of particular interest, the text describing her bedroom reads: " A beautiful bird [the peacock] led her to her bedchamber, and Beauty saw that the room was filled with her favorite things and was thoroughly comfortable." Beauty is very comfortable in the Beast's palace, including the bedroom (symbolic of sexuality), because it is where she belongs--in the place of full sovereignty and full empowerment.

The Beast himself looks fearsome to Beauty, of course. Many young women have seen the scary face of that particular beast. Embrace the Beast--manifest the talents traditionally decreed as "male"--the message says, and you too will be ugly: aggressive, a show-off, a threat, indeed, a monster. The Beast, however, knows the truth. The two sides of a human being must be united for a full life. Both principles are necessary to everyone, male and female, for all have been denied permission to use the full range of powers. Despite having a Most Favored Gender status, and the liberties that go with that status, men, like women, suffer for being separated from part of themselves. Without the Beast, Beauty led an impoverished life. And with Beauty; the *Beast* led an impoverished life. One sector of our culture tells women we must marry to be truly happy; another tells women they can't be happy if they are "just housewives and mothers." In reality, of course, the marriage that matters is the *inner* union, oneness with oneself, feeling at home in both parts of one's psyche.

Showing the world their powers can be hurtful and even dangerous to young women. But, as writer Anne Wilson Schaaf explains, women are caught in a Catch-22 *in any case*. Our culture places its premium on the white male system. However kindly, courteously, even gallantly a woman may be treated, she remains, in our culture, not quite the premium product. She is a discount brand. And if she does try to offer to the world the full range of her gifts, showing herself to be *both* sensitive and smart, gentle and strong, intuitive and brilliantly logical, merciful and just--she becomes something worse than a discount brand, she becomes a cheap imitation of the real thing, and she is often called a variety of R-rated names. Given that choice, many girls and women choose to reject half of themselves and settle for being only what the culture gives them permission to be.

Back at the Palace, the Beast proposes marriage again and again. For a long time, Beauty declines. But at last, charmed by his gentle manners, his lively mind, his obvious love for her (not to mention that very interesting household staff he employs and the presence of many more roses than cabbages on the estate), she agrees to live with him forever. (She won't agree to marry him, not being ready for that much of a mixed marriage, as she sees it!) She asks one last favor: that she may visit her father. The Beast agrees but insists that she return in one month, else his heart will break. Returning home, Beauty experiences all the distractions and temptations one might expect.

Don't overlook this part of the story. It tells us something important about ourselves. To work at becoming all we can be, to strive for the union of heart and mind, conscious and unconscious, of light and shadow, is demanding labor. Rewarding, yes, but challenging and difficult. The traditional fairy tale does not explicitly tell us what it requires for Beauty to learn to live with and love the Beast, but there is another story about the couple which does just that. At this point, let us focus on the fact that it is much easier to "stay at home," not to make the soul journey, not to go in search of the hidden life within us. It's easy to keep on doing what you've been doing, especially if you get rewarded for it. If you're Beauty (or Lazy, or Dopey, etc.) it's easy to fill your days with shopping and clothes and dancing and hours at the spa in the mall. If you're Brainy, it easy to lose yourself in books and computers and competition for scholarships. How often the gifted in our culture keep doing what they do so well but at the expense of their personal lives, their relationships, even their sanity! And so Beauty is almost tempted to overstay her holiday, to forget where she is going in her life.

Despite having a Most Favored Gender status, and the liberties that go with that status, men, like women, suffer for being separated from part of themselves.

Just in time, she returns. Without her, the Beast has succumbed to his heart-sickness and is near death. Beauty finally gathers the courage needed to make a commitment and say the M-word. She realizes the depth of her love and says she will marry him. And with that pledge, the fearsomeness of the Beast vanishes to reveal--Did we doubt it?--a handsome prince. The spell has been broken! Any they live happily ever after.

The traditional fairy tale focused on the separation of the opposites and on the magic of the union. The contemporary television version of the story ("Beauty and the Beast") focuses on the hard work of staying united, of keeping mind and soul, anima and animus, truly wedded in an imperfect world. Here, Beauty is Katherine, an attractive and brilliant woman, successful in the larger world as a crusading journalist. The Beast is Vincent, a monster, part man and part ravening lion.

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It's A Long Lane That Has No Turning
by Barbara Dreher

The summer was long and hot at Long Lane School, the euphemistic title of a correctional institution in Middletown, CT. In 1953 I was in the elite corps of college interns supervising the activities of girls who had taken the wrong lane in life - runaways, preggies, druggies, incorrigibles. Some were victims, some were victimizers, but we all sweated together weeding flower beds, picking peas or strawberries, hoeing weeds out of the potato patch. Five p.m. meant "wash up," and the staff dormitory had deep, wide bath tubs. They looked vaguely Victorian and were so cavernous and enveloping one could submerge up to the eyes and ears and feel peacefully remote. After thirty minutes we had to join the chattering girls in the dining room.

Forty years later I find myself struggling with Mother at the end of a hot day. She will not take a dip in the pool although she was once a good swimmer. She will not be coaxed into the bath tub although cleanliness was always a high priority. Sweaty from puttering in the backyard, she watches me in the shower (which pleasures I loudly extol) but cannot overcome her fear of water or closed places or whatever. I persuade her to wash some stockings in the sink and with that distraction and chirpy chatter I strip off her light dress and give her a sponge bath.

Mother didn't choose the wrong lane in life, but she reminds me of the Long Lane girls because she's short (4 ft., 10 inches) and the scar on her belly shows she's been pregnant (Caesarean birth). She's also been a runaway (from a nursing home) and a druggie (prescription psychotropics) because some nurses found her "incorrigible." Perhaps her lane got too long or the black box of controls got lost.

Dementia as a word has the feminine ending *a*, as does *Hysteria*. The latter is derived from the word *womb* because Aristotle observed that women, mostly, seemed to have uncontrollable outbursts of emotion or fear. Actually, more women have dementia because they survive longer. It is characterized by perseverations (like raking one spot of grass until it's bald), irrational behavior (starting an electric burner under a plastic bowl) and extreme forgetfulness. It is a progressive, long-term condition. Hysteria is also irrational, but it is short-term. Its victims seem unable to inhibit wild emotional swings from laughter to crying. Because she has forgotten the social/emotional significance of people and events, my mother rarely laughs or cries anymore.

Girls at Long Lane seemed crazy at times, but their outbursts often involved calculation and manipulation. When newcomers evidenced hysteria, they were not put in solitary locked rooms so they could vent anger and outrage without hurting themselves or others. Later they formed new relationships and became passionate accusers when staff showed favoritism. Their intense friendships were marked by blood like the Indians. Healed razor cuts on the forearm showed how many times love had flared and died.

What a balm it is to realize that a bad memory helps avoid unpleasantness. Mother harbors no resentment for the casual and close friends that have cut her. She has stopped asking for her husband of 56 years. She enjoys whichever man is kind and cordial, usually my husband. After helping him rake the yard one day she came into the kitchen and confided, "Gee, Barb, he's an awfully nice fellow. Why don't we invite him to lunch. I like him a lot. I wouldn't mind marrying him. No sense waiting until you're too old....But somehow, I haven't got the push."

By summer's end in 1953 I had decided against a career in social work. It seemed more reactive than creative, and I missed a personal social life because the institution required alternate weekend duty. A less objective reason was the morale factor. Because the girls had such multi-faceted problems, I felt helpless. There were no shining solutions. After returning to college, I still jumped out of bed to investigate whenever I heard laughing late at night. I mistook it for hysterical crying. The summer had set my mind on misery, and the glasses all looked half-empty.

Now I cannot walk away from the service role. There is little or no social life, but that doesn't hurt as much as the depressing mind set. Where is the wisdom and compassion I didn't learn as a college intern? Perhaps I will find them at the end of Mother's long lane or my own.

BARBARA B. DREHER is an adjunct instructor at Wittenburg University in Springfield, Ohio. Her book, Communication Skills for Working with Elders, *was made series choice by Springer Publishing Co., New York City.*

NCTE NEWS

KATHY G. SHORT, University of Arizona, has been elected chair of the Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English. She was elected by the Elementary Section Steering Committee, which is responsible for governance of the Section's 12,000 members. Short will serve a two-year term representing the Elementary Section on NCTE's Executive Committee. Her term begins after the NCTE Annual Convention in Orlando, November 18 - 21, 1994.

BETTY C. HOUSER, an English/language arts teacher at Belmond/Klemme High School in Belmond, Iowa, has been elected associate chair of the Secondary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English. Houser will serve a two-year term on the NCTE Executive Committee as a representative of the 40,000 members of the Secondary Section, the largest of the three NCTE Sections. Her term will begin after the NCTE Annual Convention in Orlando, November 18-21, 1994.

Casey Miller and Kate Swift: Women Who Dared To Disturb The Lexicon

An Interview by Elizabeth Isele

I was delighted to accept *WILLA's* invitation to interview Kate Swift and Casey Miller. I knew in general about their ground-breaking work to eliminate sexist pronouns and gender-biased vocabulary from standard English usage, but since these women are loath to toot their own horns the dynamic behind many of their specific accomplishments had eluded me. They were early pioneers in the Women's Movement, and I was eager to learn how they had accomplished so much so quietly.

I have now visited with Kate and Casey in their Connecticut home overlooking the river and in their Maine house overlooking the ocean. (Someone told me once that sea captains have extraordinary vision because they're always looking far out over the water to the horizon. I wonder if Casey's and Kate's often prescient vision is nurtured by their proximity to the water?) Both homes are like the authors they house. Outside they are unassuming; inside their rooms are filled with antique treasures, family portraits, warmth, and much light. It may be the fire crackling on the hearth, or the coals glowing in the cast-iron biscuit oven. It may be the steaming cup of coffee they've extended for you to cradle in your hands. Mostly, though, I think the warmth comes from the authors themselves. They are always thinking: what has been? what is? and what could be? Their questions generate tremendous energy, and they are keenly interested in what you are thinking. They are as interested in learning (from you or me) as they are in teaching. Faith fuels their optimism that people will correct the inequities rampant in our culture once they are aware of them. And, these revolutionaries are committed to raising people's awareness through what they do best: editing and writing.

While working as freelance editors from a home basement office in Connecticut, Casey Miller and Kate Swift raised editorial questions that shook the foundations of standard English language usage. What began as a "simple" copyediting assignment, developed over a period of years into a ground-breaking essay for *MS* magazine, an original article for the *New York Times Magazine*, and matured as two unique books. In each instance the authors quietly worked behind the scenes raising issues that needed to be addressed about how language shapes culture and culture shapes language--both to the oppression of women.

Miller and Swift each had well-rounded and successful editing careers before forming their partnership in 1970. "We felt we'd be a great business team, and I could see that Casey was having a much better time at her freelance job as her own boss than I did in mine," said Swift.

Miller said, "That first year, Seabury Press called to ask if we could copyedit a junior high school sex education course manual for them. We agreed because we trusted the publisher who claimed the manuscript was straightforward without being clinical and that the author's main gist was mutual respect between males and females."

"We really had no idea how fateful that decision was," said Swift. "But it did not take long for us to realize that no matter what philosophical import existed in the author's intent, the text was not making his point."

"It was so weighted on the side of men that it left women and girls in some sort of limbo," commented Miller. "The message coming through was that girls are not as important, responsible, or self-sufficient as boys."

Swift said, "we suddenly realized what was keeping his message--his good message--from getting across, and it hit us like a bombshell. It was the pronouns! they were overwhelmingly masculine gendered. We turned in the manuscript with our suggestions such as putting singular sexist pronouns into plural gender-free ones, avoiding pronouns wherever possible, and changing word order so that girls or women sometimes preceded rather than always followed boys or men. The publisher accepted some suggestions and not others as always happens. But *we* had been revolutionized."

> Insights like these (about the sexist nature of accepted English usage) once glimpsed, do not go away. We had been sensitized, and from then on everything we read, heard on the radio and television, or worked on professionally confirmed our new awareness that the way English is used to make the simplest points can either acknowledge women's full humanity or relegate the female half of the species to secondary status. (*Words and Women*, p. xviii)

Miller and Swift who were accustomed to fine tuning language or making things correct in small grammatical ways now shifted their strategy, attempting to make things correct in major ways. I like to think of this as their assumption of Pronoun Power! Researching the situation, they drew support from other language pioneers, some of whom--including a few men--they discovered in unexpected places. They found Lynn White, for example, writing in the 1950's about masculine generic pronouns while he was president of Mills College, an all women's institution then and now.

> The penetration of this habit of language into the minds of little girls as they grow up to be women is more profound than most people, including most women, have recognized; for it implies that personality is really a male attribute, and that women are a subspecies. (*Women and Words*, p. xix)

They also found a chapter called "Sex and Semantics" in Eve Merriam's early feminist work, *After Nora Slammed the Door*, published in 1964. Eve would later support all their publishing efforts.

And they took up Wilma Scott Heide's, president of NOW in the late sixties, gauntlet on which she had inscribed,

> In any social movement, when changes are effected, the language sooner or later reflects the change. Our approach is different. ...we are changing language patterns to actively effect changes. (*Women and Words*, p. xix)

Motivated by this research, myriad other examples, and their own observations, Miller and Swift wrote a short article about sexist pronoun abuse. They called it "Desexing the Language." But true to their "copyediting correctness," and inadvertently perhaps thereby diffusing some of their political and linguistic critics, they stated up front that,

> In the long run, the problem of the generic personal pronoun is a problem of the status of women. But it is more immediately a matter of common sense and clear communication. ("Desexing the Language," *MS*, December 1971)

In the article they proposed a new truly generic personal pronoun, *tey*--and more specifically, *tey, ter, tem*, as the singular for they, their, them.

"Kate happened to know that Gloria Steinem was working for *New York* magazine, so we submitted the article to her for possible publication," said Miller, "We didn't hear anything for a long time. Then we got a phone call from a woman who said, 'You don't know anything about us, but we are forming a new magazine called MS and we'd like to run your article.' "

"It was Gloria Steinem," said Swift. "She explained they were calling from *New York* magazine, and that our article had been passed to her because she was starting the new magazine for women under the auspices of Clay Felker, publisher of *New York* magazine. The first issue of *MS* was coming out as a forty page insert in the December 1971 issue of *New York*. We said sure, we'd love to sell it to you!"

"The first stand-alone issue was published with our article in February 1972," said Miller. "After it hit the stands, there was a celebratory party at the publisher's apartment--a great place overlooking Central Park. The whole gang was there: Gloria, Eve Merriam, Letty Pogrebin, Pat Carbine, Clay Felker, Cynthia Ozick, Vivian Gornick, and Jane O'Reilly, to name just a few." "The only bad moment for us," she continued "was when we opened the issue and saw that the printer had transposed our names to Kate Miller and Casey Swift."

Pronoun Power was just the beginning for these two who dared to disturb the lexicon. Miller said, "We could not stop thinking and talking about the invisibility of women in standard English usage. As pervasive as we knew pronoun abuse to be, we also realized that probably the most negative work from the point of view of feminist perception in English is the use of man. Most discouraging was that it seemed so ingrained, we thought that there was no way to get around it."

"Just then," interrupted Swift, "we received another auspicious phone call. It was Victor Navasky, editor of the *New York Times Magazine*. Sounding somewhat exasperated he said, 'Gloria Steinem was supposed to write an article for us about feminists' concern with language. She's been promising that article for a year and a half, and still she's not put pen to paper. I just spoke with her and she said *you* could do it.' "

Swift remembers shouting back, "She said *we* could do it!"

"Yes," he said, "We want 4000 words in three weeks. And there's a kill fee!"

"We told him we'd think about it. We didn't promise to do it. But in the next moment we got a call from Gloria. 'You've got to do it. That is what this whole movement's about. You have most of the material in your heads and I'll send you everything I've collected in my file. You just have to go ahead and do it.' So when she told us we had to do it, we figured we just had to do it. And we did it," said Swift.

"But neither one of us had confidence," added Miller.

"No," said Swift. "We had both written and published but it never occurred to us that the *New York Times* would ever want to print something of ours as a magazine piece."

"Really, it was the hardest job we ever did, added Miller. "We didn't have much time. Thank goodness we had a wonderful editor, Glenn Collins. He was quite young, but he was very supportive."

In fact the *Handbook* was his idea, and that was our next step," said Swift. "He mentioned that it was customary for authors to write a brief description of themselves for the article, something like 'two freelance writers from Connecticut.' I thought that sounded like plenty, but he wanted us to add just a *little* bit more."

"Why don't you say you are writing a book on the subject?" he suggested.

"Because we're not!" we answered.

"Say it anyway," he said. "Maybe somebody will call you and ask you to write the book."

"Sure enough," said Swift. "When the article appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, the phone began ringing with editors' calls and one in particular asked, 'Are you writing that book?'"

"A neighbor of ours said, 'What you need is an agent.' And she helped us find Ginger Barber."

"Ginger sent our book prospectus out to a number of editors. One turned the book down flatly saying, 'the Women's Movement has peaked'--and this was in 1973. Several others, however, were interested and asked to talk with us about it. One young man spent the entire time arguing with us about some word origins because he felt they truly were male gender words."

"He didn't seem the right editor for us," confirmed Swift.

"Next," Swift added, "we sat down with Loretta Barrett at Anchor Books, Doubleday. She was just great--very gung-ho. She had a lot of other feminist books lined up and she took ours and never changed a word."

"Well, not quite," mused Miller. "She did switch the order of two chapters and persuaded us to include

the epilogue."

"Oh that epilogue," said Swift. "All we wanted to do was to point out to people that ours was a male-centered language. We all have this male-imposed view when we first acquire language, and it gets reinforced in the recess of using language. We wanted people to think about this and then try to come up with their own ways of solving the problem. There is no set solution such as every 'man' should become 'person,' so we refused to make this a how-to-do-it book."

"But Loretta persisted," said Miller. " She felt that we set out all these problems and it was only natural for people to want help. 'Can't you give them a few suggestions or alternative ways to have nonsexist words in an epilogue?' she asked."

"So, we finally agreed and wouldn't you know it," said Swift, "one of our reviewers reviewed only our epilogue!" (The book was, of course, *Words and Women* published in 1977.)

"Even so," said Miller in response to Swift's exasperation. "We were extremely lucky with the review attention the book did receive. Benjamin DeMott, a member of President Ford's Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs and author of 'Surviving the Seventies,' for example, reviewed it for the *New York Times Book Review*. Calling it a 'model work of its kind,' DeMott said,

> The book is a complacency shaker. It convinces you, if you need convincing, that belief in the inconsequentiality of many of the customs and conventions under examination is, in fact a species of complicity in the continual humiliation of half of the human world. (*New York Times Book Review*, Sunday, July 4th, 1976)

Miller and Swift did not have to wage an aggressively militant battle. Their thought-provoking questions were "complacency shakers." And they did go on to write a how-to book, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing* as more and more people came to the pair who knew the questions for answers and/or solutions. Their new editor, Carol Cohen at T.Y. Crowell, encouraged them to write a handbook modeled on *The Elements of Style*.

Swift said, "She wanted the pages to look just like *Style* with a paragraph of writing and then an example in a short, easy-to-read mode. Again we were hesitant because we just wanted to give people the background, to make them aware of what was happening right under their noses, so that they could make their own decisions. He didn't want to tell people Do This or Don't Do That!"

"Heavens no," said Miller. "We are not word police! However," she continued, "we had lost our early naivete, thinking in our very first article that all we had to do was to introduce a new pronoun and everyone would adopt it. Change is slow, and we desperately need more gender-free words."

I asked where these words might come from, and Miller talked about a recent study at the University of Pennsylvania. "It cited young women, especially ghetto women, are on the leading edge of language change because they are freer, less inhibited, and more imaginative with words. Many of their words don't make it though because they are slang and because teachers correct their spontaneous use of language. Teachers certainly inhibited me. In fact, some of the people most critical of our work are English teachers trained in the old way. Some are even scornful, saying we break all the rules. Seeing these people trapped in their own language and not even knowing it just increases the challenge for us. Our hope now, as it always has been, is that once people are cognizant of the de- or sub-humanizing effect of sexist language on women--especially if they have the same kind of epiphany we did--they will consciously alter their words to eliminate semantic biases."

My coffee had long since cooled, but the house was warmer than ever. I had learned the dynamic behind Casey Miller and Kate Swift's accomplishments. It is their impeccable attention to details. In their hands even the smallest pronouns brought to light, carefully examined, and altered can effect profound changes in human relationships and understanding.

ELIZABETH ISELE is currently working on a book about living American women such as Swift and Miller who have made a difference.

Continued from page 4, Vicki Silver Zack

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Continued from page 4, Driek Zirinsky

formed an organization called "Students for Censorship Awareness." Their goal is to advocate for free access to literature for children and teenagers in schools. Because they stand outside the school systems, they believe they can speak more freely than the teachers and students in a particular school. I'm proud to be a faculty advisor to this group.

I'd like also to recognize the women in higher education who have recently assumed NCTE editorships: Patricia Stock, *English Education*; Leila Christenbury, *English Journal*; Sandra Stotsky, *Research in the Teaching of English*. They join Louise Smith who has been editing *College English* for the past year. We wish them well.

This is a transition time between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next, a time for rest and reflecting and planting a few things in the garden. Out here in the desert we've had a hot, dry spring that seemed to turn straight into summer. Even though I'm not much of a gardener, this year I felt like sticking some plants in the ground and planning for the future. I'd like to hope for a rich harvest of another sort in the fall: roles for women in higher education outside the classroom, good books to read and teach, a climate congenial to flourishing young women.

Balsa Women

These are the Balsa women . . .
you know them

Balsa wood is fine-grained land light.
Men like it because it is easy to carve.

She is thirty;
Small and delicate,
With the kind of voice
That is easy to talk over.
Her brothers smothered her dates,
Until she married and
Settled into perfection.
When her second child was born
With difficulty, everybody prayed.
She quit her job and stayed home.
The second child was autistic.
Everyone was sorry.
However many days it takes to make a saint,
She didn't have enough.
Her husband refused to let her get a job.
She was needed by the second child,
Until she cracked, of course,
And spent some time "on vacation" at a hospital.
Nobody knew about it - nothing changed.
When she came back she said, "I never knew it was okay to be angry."
No one hear her.
Her husband filed for divorce
And took her children away.
Her brothers helped him,
Claiming she was abusive.

Nobody prayed,
They just left her alone.

They shape it as they want, cutting away
Unwanted parts until the figure is complete.

She is forty and lives alone.
She married young and worked,
While he drank and nearly died.
She nursed him until he was whole,
And started working a decent job.
She catered to his every whim.
He received a promotion, and
They transferred to Iowa where
He divorced her and kept everything.
He moved in with another woman
And her children, saying . . .
"My other wife was empty."
She struggles on her own
Trying not to let the bitterness eat her mind
She has no children to comfort her.

His parents were first cousins
and his brother drooled.

Each carving is a personal work of art,

She is fifty and teaches piano.
Her husband never wanted children.
When she had their son,
He wasn't there.
He dabbled in stocks,
While she paid for her life and
Her son's with the piano money.
He required the son to be perfect . . .
To do without emotions.
The perfect son moved to California,
And took a lover who beat him up.
His father brought him home.
She is surrounded by gaiety -
She listens to them crying in the night.

Her son she prayed to have;
Her husband who never touches her.

Much better than the living tree.

She is seventy-five and short.
Her family is raised,
Her husband retired.
He worked in a factory.
She stayed home with the kids.
She waits for him - she waits on him.
She never learned to drive.
The state gave her a card, and
Now she has an official identity.
They live in a two-story house,
With an upstairs bathroom.
She wants to add one off the kitchen,
But he says, "Exercise is good for you."
Her arthritis defines her days.
Often sleep eludes her.
Nights are walked away.
She keeps her crying to a minimum,

Until she wets herself,
Before she gets upstairs.

Balsa wood is fine-grained and light.
Men like it because it is easy to carve.
They shape it as they want,
Cutting away the unwanted parts,
Until the figure is complete.
Every carving is a personal work of art,
Much better than the living tree.
Each man names it,
And claims ownership . . .
And changes the wood forever.

by Kathleen S. Rohr

Voice Breaks to Fingers

for Matt Gillis, a young and ancient poet

Another chiseled boy
this one with harder angles
and softer spitting image
his language not all smoke and glass
but syllabic whistling wind through the
streaming seats
This boy flashes green
or a blue he doesn't yet know the slice of
the negative space of the corner chair and
black board cannot absorb him
as he leans back
in eagle-hooded nonchalance
catching his mouth in a locked line
all vaulting planes pulled flat
he waits to be passed over
But this boy is fresh corn
his paper-silent air builds rings
From his determined circle
wide-stringed heart arcs all over the wild plains
page
springing way beyond what's there and years

by Donna Decker

Bearing Witness
by Martha Marinara

The morning reaches for 11 a.m. I am rinsing breakfast dishes--cereal bowls, spoons, bits of pulp off the rims of juice glasses--and listening to a game show on television. I never watch these shows, only listen, not wanting to see well-dressed people, their shell white, exuberant smiles missing easy questions, though somehow lucky enough to amass 10 or 15 thousand dollars. *Manatee*, I think, while pouring the leftover milk from Teddy's cereal bowl down the drain. Why can't the boys ever finish the milk in their bowls? I pour and manatees bravely dodge Cheerios, their huge bodies graceful, flirting in and out of the green coastal waterways of Southern Florida. The buzzer sounds. "I'm so sorry," says the show host, "but you still have $8,000 left." I tip Eric's cereal bowl, consciously pouring the leftover milk into my coffee cup. The coffee will be too sweet and taste faintly of oats, but I feel sacred doing this, a holy part of the food chain.

Tomorrow I should go back to work. I have no more sick time left. I have stayed home for almost a week, wandering days in my frayed blue robe, barefoot, smoking cigarettes. I am not physically sick, just tired, worn down, dry. The only other time I felt close to this was right after my divorce, but then I felt chipped, fragmented, scattered from my core. This time it is different. I am not broken apart, but melting to silica and soda ash, my transparencies heavily borne away, sea on glass, beaten smooth and vulnerable.

Next week holds the Fourth of July. Teddy asked me before bed last night if we could go to see the fireworks on the beach. Ankle-thin bulbs under his pajama cuffs, his voice a begging, confronting treble, his eyebrows heavy: "Do you think we could go to the fireworks, Mom?" Can you get out of your bathrobe, Mom? Can you drive us to the beach? Can you bear to look at the exploding stars, fragments of light melting into dark blue waves? The buzzer sounds. "I'm sooo sorry," says the game show host, in a slow drawl. *Boron*, I think, before turning up the set. Boron added to glass gives it strength.

Tomorrow I will go back to work, I say this aloud as I load white uniforms into the washer, add a cup of bleach. There is entirely too much white in my life. White halls, white shoes silent on white floors, all permeated with the smell of disinfectant. I think of buying a red cotton sweater to wear on the floor.

The charge nurse on pediatrics, handing me white kleenex, patting my shoulder, said, "Take a few days off." I could not explain to her that it was not Andrew Roger's death, not the release of his bleeding out red from his nose and mouth and IV sites, too few platelets to bind his blood, hold it inside, but his tight fingers gripping mine like a promise. All the fingers I've held, fingers curved like shells, years of fingers intertwined, chainlinked miles of fencing holding in the landscape. All the years of full, acrid bedpans and white sheets, marking temperatures on charts slowly, neatly, right hand in blue pen. I am drowning in cotton balls. Drowning in a darkened house and old blue robe.

Lincoln, I yell at the TV set. Lincoln is the capital of Nebraska, population 129,541. I wonder how much a manager for McDonalds makes in Lincoln or a telephone operator.

I work the 3-11 shift in the summer so that I will have more time to spend with my sons. My mother comes over at 2:30, plays with Eric and Teddy, feeds them dinner, takes them to an occasional movie, puts them to bed. I've asked her to move in with us many times, the boys could share a room, but she always refuses. I think she is hoping I will meet a man, remarry, live happily ever after, laugh more. I used to wish this, too, had a strong need for a back to lean against, long calves to wrap my toes around.

"When threatened, sea cucumbers are able to throw up their insides. While their attacker goes after their insides, they creep away." I did not know this. I ignore this. I ignore the buzzer that goes off in my head. Wrong. I put out my cigarette, half smoked, in the ashtray Teddy made for me for Mother's Day.

Eric and Teddy have turned on the lawn sprinkler. I hear their shrieking, laughing in the sound of spray. In a moment I will call them into the kitchen to rub sunscreen on their shoulders. They are pale blond and freckled. Like me, they burn easily. My care giving, motherly ministrations have recently begun to insult their boy-child invincibility. I will give them popsicles, cherry and lime; I will kiss their noses. I turn off the television, light another cigarette.

The boys will stay with their father for two weeks in August. He and his thin dark-haired wife have them every other weekend and two weeks in the summer. Ted acts as if he is doing me a favor each time he picks them up. Holding out his large hands, palms up, thumb turned inward, "You'll have some time to yourself, Emily. A nice break." I miss them when they are gone, their trilled questions, freckles, sweaty squabbles and dirty hands, pinwheel whorls on the backs of their heads. When they are with their father I feign their presence; I vacuum around Eric's matchbox cars, leave Teddy's yellow pajamas behind the bathroom door, eat crunchy peanut butter on Wonder Bread.

"Mom." Eric is rushing wind through the open deck door and into the kitchen. "Mom, we found a hu-normous turtle." Eric speaks in exclamation points. They dot his speech like stars. I like the words he creates better than any in the dictionary.

"How hu-normous?" I ask. Eric opens his arms as far as they will go. His face is flushed, his movements quick, fingers dart about, pink geckos scurrying in the air. His father thinks he lacks self-discipline and direc-

tion. I think he is four.

Right now Eric is hopping up and down, banging on my knees with the palms of his hands. "You have to come and see it, Mom. Teddy wants to pick it up." I will not get dressed and go to work, shop at the market, see a movie, but I will put on clothes and go see their turtle.

"Give me a minute to get dressed, honey. I'll be right out." I am talking to Eric's back. "Eric, if the turtle has colors on its shell or can pull its head and feet all the way into its shell, it's safe to pick it up. But if not, it might be a snapper." Eric runs outside.

"Mom says it's not a snapper, so we can touch it."

"How does she know that, meatball brain? She hasn't even looked at it." Teddy is six and lost faith in my magical powers when he turned five.

"Because she's a nurse, stupid."

Terrapin. Probably from Johnsons Pond, I think on my way to my bedroom. I pull a pair of jeans out of the bottom drawer of my bureau, an old gray sweatshirt of Ted's off the closet floor. I run my fingers through my short hair and look in the mirror over my bureau. I pass the test: pale, tired, suburban mother of two boys. It surprises me how little armor it takes to cover a week spent at home in a bathrobe.

The boys are standing a few feet away from the turtle which is almost hidden at the base of a stand of tiger lilies. The turtle's head and feet are pulled inside a shell splashed with spots of red and yellow. It is not hunormous, but it is beautiful. I notice a chip on the edge of its shell and then a long crack on the right side. It will not live long.

" I think the turtle might be very scared of us," I tell my sons. "See how it's hiding its head? Let's go inside, have some lunch, and give the turtle a chance to crawl back home." And die somewhere else. I put my arms around their shoulders, Teddy pulls away from me.

"But, Mom, we can't just leave it. The pond is far away." I watch the muscles around Teddy's mouth work to smother tears. "The turtle will never make it to the pond. It's hurt." I look at my sons' dirty bare feet, the clear beads of water of the grass, the injured turtle. I do not look at Teddy's face, his shaking lower lip. I want to say the turtle made it to our yard, it can crawl back. "Teddy." I look at his eyes. They are the same light green as his father's, but the skin around his eyes lies soft, sad, compassionate. His sun-burned cheeks are wet. "O.K. You two get dressed. I'll find a box to put the turtle in. We'll drive it to the pond."

The boys take turns getting dressed and guarding the turtle. I look in closets for a box, under the sink for a pail. The only box I can find that is big enough for the turtle is full of Eric's matchbox cars. I decide he will not mind if we use it and dump the little metallic cars and trucks onto the dining room rug. The noise they make is metallic blue, red, purple--small collisions of no consequence. I find my car keys and purse on the dining room table, under a weeks' worth of newspapers and mail. I look at my reflection in the hall mirror, put on red lipstick. Everyone is ready, but the turtle.

I tell the boys I will pick up the turtle; it might bite. I do not want either of them to see how badly its shell is cracked. The turtle sticks its head out suddenly and looks at me. Its yellow lidless eyes entreat, say pain, say kiss it. I blink. The turtle's eyes are blank pale moons. It opens and shuts its mouth a few times, gulping air, pulls its head back into the shell. I put it in the box.

Teddy sits quietly on the drive to the pond. He holds the box in his lap, stares at the turtle as if it might vanish from a lack of perceptual vigilance. Eric fills the warm air inside the car with questions. "What do turtles eat?"

"Insects," I tell him, "And small fish, like minnows. Turtles eat little creatures that feed on algae. That's why they live in ponds. Their food supply is there."

"Do they sleep?"

"Yes, but they don't snore like you do." This gets a small laugh from Teddy, more like a snort really, a breath of disdain from his nose. I make a left at Greenway street.

"Why did the turtle walk to our yard?"

"Maybe he was bored with the pond and wanted to see the world. Or, maybe he took a wrong turn."

I don't tell him from watching television. "I read a lot when I was young. And, I remember little things, details, especially about animals."

Eric sits up straighter. "Mom, would you teach me to read tonight?"

"Sure, baby." I reach over and squeeze his thigh.

"No one can learn to read in one night." Teddy is still angry at me. He can not forgive this past week as easily as Eric.

"Mom could. Right, Mom?" I don't answer but read the road signs so that I don't miss the turn.

Teddy carries the box close to his chest as we walk the short distance from the road to the water. I smell green growth, brown decay. It is dark quiet, still aired. Tree branches arch high over head, a cathedral dome. Teddy notices other turtles sunning on a log at the edge of the pond. His face brightens.

"Do you think those are his parents?" Eric asks. I nod my head yes.

Teddy puts the box down. I lift the turtle out and place it in the soft mud and leaves at the edge of the pond. After a few minutes his head and feet stick out. The needle claws on his feet make lines on the green deer moss and mud as he slips into the thick pond water.

"Goodbye, Alpert," says Teddy softly.

Just as softly I ask, "Alpert?" Teddy nods his head. Eric holds my hand. I put my other arm around Teddy's shoulders. He does not pull away this time.

MARTHA MARINARA writes poetry and fiction and is an Assistant Professor at Armstrong State College, Savannah where she directs the Writing Center and teaches composition, rhetoric, and poststructuralism.

Feminist and Other (?) Pleasures
by Alayne Sullivan

Many readers may recognize, in my title, an all too obvious reference to Laura Mulvey's text *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Before I align the conceptual thrust of this paper with particular elements of Mulvey's work, I want to describe the context in which her work was explored. For the past several months, I have been teaching a post-graduate course in an English Education program call *Perspectives on Popular Literature in the English Classroom*. Within the context of this course, we read various selections of popular literature: two romances, a detective novel, a western, and a work of science fiction. In reading the literary works for the course, we brought to bear a range of perspectives that strongly shaped our interpretive angles on and impressions of these books. For example, we read Robert Waller's *The Bridges of Madison County* and Terri McMillian's *Waiting to Exhale*, and considered them in light of the statements their huge readership made about the aesthetics of pleasure, romance, and entertainment via popular culture. We read Lawrence Block's murder mystery *A Dance at the Slaughterhouse* and considered it in light of Mulvey's "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure' and Narrative Cinema." We did the same with the western novel *Lonesome Dove* by Larry McMurtry and William Gibson's science fiction *Neuromancer*, and, as well, considered issues of curriculum, reader-text transaction, and especially prevailing popular emblems therein of archetype and mythology.

As we read each one of these works, we juxtaposed them with film, television, video, music, and also journals, magazines, and "news-stand" publications that ranged from *The National Enquirer* to the *New York Post*. We were especially sensitive, in doing all this, to the "leaky" intertextual boundaries that bring all these romances and murders and westerns and sci fi adventures into such close relationship with other venues. As John Fiske put it:

> Because of their incompleteness, all popular texts have leaky boundaries; they flow into each other, they flow into everyday life. Distinctions among texts are as invalid as the distinctions between text and life. Popular culture can be studied only intertextually, for it exists only in this intertextual circulation. (126)

The word *text* is used here to signal not just a paper and/or cloth-bound sheaf of pages but just about *any* phenomenon that represents a body of images that are coherent in some way. With that statement in mind, we can regard a popular video, music selection, a film, a TV show, a popular magazine, and so on as a *text*. These texts are *read* by millions upon millions of viewers, listeners, and readers, in the more traditional sense of that word, every day. Thus, in the course, we *read* the many texts of popular culture alongside the popular literary texts, all the while taking stock of the statements such material made about the culture in which we live. Now then, where do these remarks leave us with regard to Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure" and the "other pleasures that are signalled by the title of this article?

The Spectator Position and Masculine Identification

Early in the *Popular Literature* course, the students were invited (make that, assigned) to read Mulvey's "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure' and Narrative Cinema" inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun*. It is an article in which Mulvey reflects on an earlier and very well known article that she had written. The earlier article is about the images of women on screen. As Mulvey puts it, "I was interested in the relationship between the image of woman on the screen and the 'masculinization' of the spectator position.... In-built patterns of pleasure and identification impose masculinity as 'point of view' ..."(29) In the article the post-graduate students read, Mulvey pursues two other lines of thought. Again, her own words represent those thoughts most accurately:

> First, ... whether the female spectator is carried along, as it were by the scruff of the text, or whether her pleasure can be more deep-rooted and complex. Second ... how the text and its attendant identifications are affected by a *female* character occupying the centre of the narrative arena. So far as the first issue is concerned, it is always possible that the female spectator may find herself so out of key with the pleasure on offer, with its 'masculinisation,' that the spell of fascination is broken. On the other hand she may not. She may find herself secretly, unconsciously almost, enjoying the freedom of action and control over the diegetic world that identification with a hero provides. It is *this* female spectator that I want to consider here. (29)

In considering Mulvey's (after) thoughts on visual pleasure and narrative cinema, we were studying the applicability of her remarks to popular narrative fiction. We were depending on the intertextual bonds between such "texts" for the relevance of remarks about narrative cinema for the study of popular fiction and culture.

Ultimately, what I want to explore here is the dramatic and surprising reaction (at least to me!) of many of my post-graduate students to Mulvey's thoughts about the female spectator/reader who finds herself "secretly and even unconsciously enjoying the freedom of action and control over the diegetic world that identification with a hero provides." (29) The key ideas, then, orienting my own text are expressed by the following three questions: (1) What are the essential elements of Mulvey's consideration about this female spectator?; (2) What were the essential elements of the students' dramatic and surprising reactions to Mulvey and other female theorists aligned with her position?; and (3) What

do their reactions signify for the "other" pleasures pointed to in my title?

As we begin to look at a summary of the essential elements of Mulvey's consideration about the female who enjoys her freedom of action and control in a narrative world where she identifies with a 'masculinized' hero, it is critical to first know a bit about the popular literary texts we were reading in our course at that time. One was Block's *A Dance at the Slaughterhouse*; the other was McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* - both popular by any standard. I think it's fair and accurate to say that these texts could be summarized as having strongly male protagonists, wherein the action of the stories was centered on the subject of *their* quests and intrigues. It was the males(s) whose actions controlled the storyline, the male(s) around whom the other characters revolved, the males who had the power to pursue the acts defining the narratives. The women who were integrally involved in the evolution of the stories were either killed off in the opening sequences (in a grisly murder-rape, as in the mystery thriller) or were primarily adjuncts - embellishments even - to the motives, dreams, and emotional vicissitudes of the male characters. Actually, many of the women in the stories to which I refer were whores, bought and paid for by the men whose pleasure they serviced; McMurtry's descriptions of the acts from which such pleasure derives is rendered with what often seems comic dryness. Mulvey wonders if the female spectator is sometimes "carried along by the scruff of the text"; in the case of the western epic novel, it may well be not untrue to maintain that the one central female protagonist is carried along by the scruff of the cowboy's quest. I offer these summaries (puns and all) with full recognition of the biased slant they carry, but take full advantage of the reader's prerogative, claimed by reader-response criticism, to "write" the text from a personal perspective. And that perspective, as regards the summaries of these popular texts, is that they are unquestionably male-centered. In subsequent pages of this article, I'll also deconstruct the characterization of "male-centered" I have expressed here.

In her "afterthoughts" article, Mulvey tells us quite clearly that she is "concentrating on films in which a woman central protagonist is shown to be unable to achieve a stable sexual identity, torn between the deep blue sea of passive femininity and the devil of regressive masculinity." (30) Mulvey looks to Freud in establishing the context for her argument. She cites his view of femininity - that it is complicated by the fact that it emerges out of a period that he sees as masculine for both boys and girls. Mulvey tells us, "I will only emphasize here that the development of femininity remains exposed to disturbances by the residual phenomena of the early masculine period. [....T]here is a repeated alternation between periods in which femininity and masculinity gain the upper hand." (30) She goes on to say that Hollywood genre films structured around masculine pleasure "allow a woman spectator to rediscover that lost aspect of her sexual identity, the never fully repressed bed-rock of feminine neurosis." (31) The active/masculine convention structures most popular narratives says Mulvey. She argues: "The 'grammar' of the story places the reader, listener of spectator *with* the hero" (32), and that "trans-sex identification is a *habit* that very easily becomes *second nature.*" (33) And now, what about the texts wherein a woman protagonist *is* central and where she is unable to achieve a stable sexual identity torn between passive femininity and regressive masculinity? How is that narrative thread played out in *Duel in the Sun*, and what significance does Mulvey's analysis of that text hold for the questions directing this article?

Mulvey explains that *Duel in the Sun* "consists of a series of oscillations in [the woman protagonist's sexual identity ... between different desperations. ... Pearl is unable to settle or find a 'femininity' in which she and the male world can meet. In this sense, although the male characters personify Pearl's dilemma, it is their terms that make and finally break her." (36) The woman, as central character, cannot accept a correct married femininity, according to Mulvey's analysis (in light of Freud we must remember) or find a place in the macho world either. And now for one last time, I must enter Mulvey's words before we can begin to speak of my graduate students' strong and exclamatory reactions to Mulvey's text:

> The masculine identification ... reactivates for [the female spectator] a fantasy of 'action' that correct femininity demands should be repressed. The fantasy 'action' finds expression through a metaphor of masculinity [that] acts as a straitjacket. (37)
> I have argued that Pearl's position [the woman protagonist] in *Duel in the Sun* is similar to that of the female spectator as she temporarily accepts "masculinisation' in memory or her 'active' phase. Rather than dramatizing the success of masculine identification, Pearl brings out its sadness. Her 'tomboy' pleasures, her sexuality, are not fully accepted by Lewt [her potential fiancée] except in death. So, too, is the female spectator's fantasy of masculinisation at crosspurposes with itself, restless in its transvestite clothes. (37)

And so, we are presented with narrative situations via Mulvey's text that feature a female protagonist "transsexually" identifying with an active masculinity. And we must be clear about Mulvey's point here: just as the female protagonist does not sit easily with this role, just as she experiences a restless sadness thereby, so too is the female spectator at crosspurposes with herself - restless, unstable, and unfulfilled. Where does that leave us?

Reacting to "Masculine Spectator Identification"

Let's remind ourselves once again of the point at issue here. We are presented with the spectre of a female spectator secretly--perhaps unconsciously--enjoying the freedom of action and control that identification with a hero provides. This female spectator, in temporarily

accepting masculinisation in memory of her "active" phase, is like the central woman protagonist in some films. Both resist a "correct" feminine position, shift "restlessly in borrowed transvestite clothes" (33), and are at crosspurposes with themselves.

Well, I think I have succeeded in representing Mulvey's argument with reasonable accuracy. Many--not, all, but many--of the female students who read her article were, to put it quite simply, enraged! They sputtered with anger, primarily for two reasons. The first was that they felt themselves to be rather objectified in psychoanalytic terms, without their permission, according to a value system (Freud's) that they DID NOT buy into. The second, and by far most compelling of the reasons for their fury, was that they felt judged and criticized for, in fact, "enjoying the freedom of action and control over the diegetic world that identification with a hero provides." (29) They were mad as hell at me for suggesting that the perspective afforded in Mulvey's article might represent a valid angle on their happy identifications with the protagonists of the murder mystery and the western epic we read. Why could they not identify with the power and action and freedom of the male role?! They loved these stories and lived happily in the worlds constructed through their identity with the (primarily male) action. They travelled north with the cowboys until they too eventually reached Montana with the three thousand head of cattle, and they lived a happy vicariousness with all of the adventures along the way. They were one with Matt Scuddeer as he solved the murder and took the law into his won hands, as it were, at the end of that story. Just who was I, or Laura Mulvey for that matter, to characterize their identification as "restless in transvestite clothes," or as "sadness," or worse yet, as a "regressive boy/girl mixture or rivalry and play?!"

I now raise a series of rhetorical questions. They are questions that were put to the students and discussed at great length throughout the course. The first is: Did my students quite *see* that in being fully and happily satisfied in their identifications with the male "action" of the popular literature we read, they were one with a masculinity that, at least in the *stories*, objectified and puppeteered the women into rather powerless and often abused circumstances? Did they so completely lack identification with the female characters that they felt not at all compromised by their oneness with "the guys," and thus see no contrariness therein? Why did they feel *that* personally enraged at a characterization of "the female spectator's fantasy of masculinisation" deemed as "restless and unfulfilled in its transvestite clothes"? Was it Freud's depiction of femininity that bothered them so? Finally, even in the context of Schweickart's and Fetterly's views on the roles of women readers responding to predominately "male" fiction, did the women to whom I refer not want to reconsider their angry opposition to the potential snags their identifications posed?

I suppose a question that might be posed to me by readers of this article would aim to find out why I would have assigned, in the first place, popular literary texts that represented such "traditional" male-centered plots. A quick response to that last statement would have to point to the rather prevailing circumstance of much of the world of popular literature: as long as it consists of westerns, horror, science fiction,and detective works, with romances that so predominately feature women yearning to love and domesticate men (as per Radway's analysis of much of the widely popular world of romance fiction), we will be faced with a huge overload of "traditional" male-centered plots, and/or women centered texts that capitulate to and set out to titillate a male world. In truth, many of the texts selected for the course were guided by simple criteria. These criteria were to examine what was popular (i.e. being most widely read or "consumed" by a mass of readers) among the various genres of popular fiction and to read in the course what was being read by millions of readers of the texts of popular culture. I had not read any of these texts prior to teaching this course and depended on the well-informed opinions of merchants at prominent New York City book stores to guide me toward what was, in fact, "popular" fiction. To briefly address a point previously posed, my vehemently angry female students did not at all buy into Fetterly's account that "the cultural reality is not the emasculation of men by women, but the *immasculation* of women by men. As readers and teachers and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with a male point of view and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one whose central principles is misogyny." (xx) These women did not at all feel they were undergoing a literary schizophrenia--that they were in Schweickart's words, "ratifying the equation of maleness with the universe" (42), or that they were complicit with a patriarchal ideology that "draws [women] into a process that uses her against herself" (42). What then *did* these women feel, and why were they so angry at the positions held by Mulvey, Schweickart, and Fetterly?

According to them, they did not feel the least bit "immasculated" by the texts that they read. They identified--put it in their terms--fully with the (male) action and adventure, BUT did emphatically not feel "restless in transvestite clothes"; did not feel sadly unfulfilled; and did not feel torn between passive femininity and regressive masculinity. The female readers to whom I refer expressed their identity with the *power and action and freedom* of the male characters and did NOT see themselves at all imbricated, in that identification, with a double oppression. They did not feel a powerlessness resulting from an "endless division of self against self, the consequence of the invocation to identify as male while being reminded that to be male - to be universal - ... is to be *not female*." (Fetterly, original italics, xiii)

Other Pleasures

The pleasured identification, experienced and

vehemently defended by certain women in the popular literature course, was with action, freedom, and power. The identification was *not* with the males themselves, *not* with the male gender and male sexuality, but with the centrality of the power, freedom and adventure of the protagonists' *experience*. This is the way it was explained by these women in the many discussions we had on the topic throughout the course. Insistently, the women referred to herein maintained their interpretive strategies *not* as androcentric, but as essentially feminist. According to them, they were, indeed, taking control of the reading experience. They were desexualizing the text--connecting to the existence behind it, affiliating themselves with and appropriating as "theirs" the power and the freedom of the story. They were rejecting the position that the actions or "grammar" of the story placed them *with* the male hero(s). The pleasure they derived depended on identification with, again, freedom and power. It was irrelevant to them that the characters who had such freedom and power in the many popular texts they read were male.

The most outspoken of the students opposing Mulvey et al strode into my office later in the week with a copy of Naomi Wolf's *Fire With Fire*. This was the feminism *she* embraced. This particular student, along with others in that course, articulated their impression of Wolf's message. It was not an active masculinity or a striving to be masculine that they sought or even a fulfillment of their "tomboy" sexuality. If there were any theoretical position that spoke for the depth of their identity with the popular murder mystery, science fiction, and western novels that they read, it would be that expressed by Wolf, and certainly not Freud via Mulvey. Wolf says:

> I am arguing ... that the current split, fashionable in parts of the progressive community, into male - evil - sexually - exploitative - rational - linear - dominating - combative - tyrannical on one hand, and female - natural - nurturing - consensus-building - healing - intuitive - aggressionless - egoless - spirit-of-the-glades on the other hand, belies the evidence of history and contemporary statistical reality. It denies the full humanity of women and men. And it creates a new version of the old female stereotype that discourages women from appropriating the power of the political and financial world to make power at last their own. (149)

It was put to me, by the women who most vehemently opposed Mulvey and company, that my characterization of many of our texts as "male centered" was a capitulation to the "victim feminist" worldview. This view holds for women seeking power through and identity with powerlessness. Wolf says, "[i]t dismantles the possibility of creating a prowoman vision of leadership, and a new kind of hierarchy based on merit." (149)

The pleasure my students derived from their identities with many of the popular literary texts that we read was based on their bonds with the power and freedom represented. And the pleasure they derived from listening to , watching, and reading the many other "texts" aligned with the popular literary ones was based on a similar principle. Passionately, these women revelled in the action adventures of the protagonists. they took ownership of Wolf's words in explaining their delight: "[I]n our heart of hearts we are not at all sure that those aggressive, controlling, dominating, and violent impulses are so alien to us after all." (150) To be sure, they reviled the murderous rape and cruelty inflicted but they were not prepared to identify with powerlessness of the "victims" nor equate their identity with the power and action of the stories with a repressed masculinity. And for me, they said, to depict many of the elements of our many "texts" as male-centered, androcentric exclusion or immasculation of their beings was infuriating.

Conclusion

I have learned a great deal both from writing these few informally expressed thoughts and engaging in the dialogue yielded in *Perspectives on Popular Literature in the English Classroom*. While I cannot look easily away from a world where power is, in fact, wielded in ways that maim and disenfranchise women, perhaps I can begin to look at the phenomenon of power without its constant clothing of gender. Can I? I leave the issue with many more questions than answers. And just when I think I can see what Wolf and my students are talking about, my experience of the film, *Cape Fear* returns. This is a story whose central narrative thread is directed by acts of such blood-curdling violence toward women that fury catches in my throat all over again as I remember it: as female viewers, we watch as one woman is hideously and graphically brutalized by a rape and two others are threatened by it throughout the remainder of the story. Naturally the protagonist--the one whose actions direct the story--is a man. Quite simply, rape is the determining variable of the storyline. This one text looms, for me, as a representative metaphor for a broad swath of the meta-text of popular culture: women are props for a storyline that so very often in music videos, TV programs, and documentary news journals features against them.

I hurry to remind myself that I may be buying into the trap of victim feminism. But I cannot quite--not yet anyway--rid myself of the visceral and gendered nature of my responses to the omnipresent and often dangerous alignment of male gender with action and power and female gender with relative lack of action and power. Perhaps in embracing, and yes identifying with, all of the wonderful action and adventure and power in these stories, I might eventually be able to stop noticing the huge dimensions and many difficult manifestations of the male/power association. Wolf's work strikes me as a call to start seeing the sociocultural and political elements of power in the world in non-gendered terms. It is a call to start seeing and celebrating elements of beneficent power and equality.

Wolf's title, *Fire With Fire*, implies a battle: combat based on an eye-for-an-eye principle of justice gained through clashing. Perhaps it is now irrelevant that such an image comes from the patriarchy of old biblical times. A central tenet of feminism, expressed by female *and* male feminists alike, has been non-violence. I cannot help being swayed and impressed by many of the principles raised by my students and by Wolf as they "enlisted" her in their opposition to Mulvey and others referred to. Rather than retain, however, the aggressive, controlling, dominating, and violent impulses of power that Wolf maintains "may not be so alien to us after all" (150), I am left thinking that I would rather work to transform the nature or power - keep its drama and allure while seeing it evolve to become primarily restorative and sustaining. The popular culture we "read" via the many texts of our lives needs at least some room for identification with a power that need not wreck psychological and physical havoc on the beings of its heroes and heroines.

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This Thing of Memory

I was teaching my students today to write
letters, coaxing children to daydream,
to retrieve some small scrap of thought
we call memory: to let it grow into a poem,
like the big wide of a smile only littlest ones get away with, the kind that freezes thin
on the front room still of adult faces.

Their heads bowed to their desks, eyes
forced shut by the mesmerizing drum
and roll of my voice, they walked, skipped,
spun in sun and rain and snow, watched
pictures pass beneath their lids, gathered touch
at the fingertips before, like so many other little things, they might quickly slip away.

And I wrote with them and read to them:
of how I put white clay ducks on my grandmother's
grassy yard that summer of unparched green -
in the space where fat-headed sunflowers pressed through a patch of slate toward sky - and how
she told me then when once she was a girl she had real ducks, somewhere faraway in a place called Poland.

And the children read what they wrote:
a boy danced in abandon with his grandfather
across the kitchen floor, a girl held on tight
to the perfumed soft of her new mother's arms.
But when I asked one - so slight it seemed she
could be carried off by wind - why tears fell onto the page ending a day feeding cows,
she said the word: "nothing." In my chest
the panic of a whole city of doors slammed
shut to keep out the impending dark.

At my brother's house later this afternoon,
where I went to witness the magic of a new baby born into the room,
I asked him for the ducks,
the ones whose pink eyes our own grandmother
wiped clear from dust with her apron corner.
He snapped they were long gone, and chickens anyway.

In my marvel and belief in the magical accuracy
of memory, I shuffled through the tattered
edged packet of yellowed pictures-as if to cast
some fortune teller's proof of it, of her, of me,
the ducks-and there they were: chickens.

I wonder now about this thing of memory:
how as it clouds up, we can heave it back
with an angler's veracity-the fish story grown
too large to lift; how a small child, will reel it in
fresh, but when asked, "Why are you crying?"
as if to raise a talisman of real against the past,
postured in a distance forged by remembering,
can say, as a matter of fact, "Oh, it's nothing."

by Andrena Zawinski

NCTE NEWS

JOAN NAOMI STEINER, an English and language arts teacher at Menasha (Wisconsin) High School, has been elected chair of the Secondary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English. She was elected by the Secondary Section Steering Committee, which is responsible for governance of the Section's 40,000 members. Steiner will serve a two-year term at the head of the Steering Committee and as the representative of the Secondary Section on NCTE's Executive Committee. Her term begins after the NCTE Annual Convention in Orlando, November 18-21, 1994.

Kate Chopin's "Lilacs" and the Story of the Annunciation

by Jacqueline Olson Padgett

When the theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes that the myth of the Virgin Mary "sanctions a deep psychological and institutional split" (59) among women in the Catholic tradition, she captures what Kate Chopin also captured in her story "Lilacs." There, sisterhood between secular and religious women appears fragmented and nearly impossible. To scrutinize the division, Kate Chopin fashions her story around the portion of the Virgin Mary myth told in St. Luke's gospel of the Annunciation of the birth of Jesus spoken to Mary by the archangel Gabriel. Working with that text, "Lilacs" mocks a tradition prizing virginity and separating the cloistered from the secular. Irony prevails, but so too does the sorrow born of religious restraint and condemnation. From the tension in the Annunciation between the virginal and the non-virginal comes ages of women divided from one another on the basis of chastity and divided internally into spiritual and physical selves.

The narrator tempts us to enjoy the ridicule only to have us feel more painfully at the story's end the dolorous effects of constrained desire, effects which diminish both nun and secular woman.

Chopin's "Lilacs" plays out this division on the grounds of a Sacred Heart convent and in the apartments of a Parisian mondaine to question whether a life almost wholly spiritual or a life almost wholly physical can be anything but the subject of ridicule. The narrator tempts us to enjoy the ridicule only to have us feel more painfully at the story's end the dolorous effects of constrained desire, effects which diminish both nun and secular woman.

As a story that draws so heavily on the details and symbols of the Annunciation story, "Lilacs," we could assume, would want to remind us of Mary's (and, by extension, woman's) salvific role as the vessel chosen by God to ensure humankind's redemption. But "Lilacs" fails to announce the good news for women as it sees too clearly that what was salvific for humankind ended up dividing women within themselves and within the Catholic tradition because of that tradition's insistence on Mary's virginity before and after childbirth. This insistence separated the ideal virginal mother from real women and mothers whose joyously experienced sexuality closed the doors to work within the clerical ministry even until today. The Annunciation story for Kate Chopin is a story told at the expense of women's sexuality and spirituality, full and complementary as they might have been. The notion of a failed annunciation, then, opens "Lilacs": "Mme. Adrienne Farival never announced her coming..." (*Chopin*, Lilacs 131). And as the hope of the annunciation fails, so too the coming of redemption and salvation through women and their sisterhood must fail; annunciation yields to renunciation and ultimately denunciation. Kate Chopin's girlhood parish was that of the Church of the Annunciation with its "large statue of the Virgin Mary" that Emily Toth describes (*Chopin* 54-55). Whatever hopeful associations the young Kate might have held about the Annunciation seem to give way utterly in the adult world of the convent, a world Chopin in her diary called an undesirable "phantasmagoria" (Toth, *Chopin* 239).

Annunciations prefigure epiphanies. They blend word and flesh, but they typically emphasize *word*. Such blending impresses us in medieval religious art on the Annunciation, like the north portal of Würzburg's Marienkapelle, where the artist represents the Virgin Mary receiving word of the conception and conceiving simultaneously, joining concept and conception as it were, through the ear as both aural and genital orifice (Kottwitz 138). Word became flesh without too much flesh getting involved, though plenty of spirit.

Likewise, the stories in the Bible suggest many divisions. Luke's gospel opens with the announcement of the impending birth of John (Lk 1.5-25). Curiously, the angel announces it to the child's father, Zechariah, not to the child's mother and Mary's kinswoman Elizabeth. Thus, we have a male God announcing to a man the birth of a male child who is the answer to the man's prayers. Meaning for the father (Zechariah and God) depends on the birth of the son. John, the text continues, "will be filled with the Holy Spirit *even* from his mother's womb" (Lk 1.15; RSV translation; my emphasis). And while we all know that the "even" refers to time (*even* from conception, in other words), it may also refer ambiguously to the womb as a place of taint, as a holding area normally so removed from higher meaning that it takes a god or at least a man to invest it with meaning. Such ambiguity also gives the oft cherished Biblical idea of deliverance and delivery a certain slant. If the soon-to-be delivered child is to be the deliverance of his people, then the womb belongs to a time of bondage.

And the one who hears the annunciation of John's birth, old Zechariah, is dumb in response (or in his failure to respond). Small wonder the angel decided to try the second annunciation in Luke's gospel on a woman! Nor is Zechariah's dumbness an isolated response. We read of it again in Ellen Gilchrist's "Drunk with Love" in the words of the plastic surgeon, Dr. Johnson:

> They have photographed men everywhere including

> some very remote tribes in New Guinea, being presented with the fact that a conception has taken place and they uniformly begin to joke about the matter, many going into this sort of uncontrolled smiling laughing state. (8)

Luke Haverty, sitting in for St. Luke, I suppose, in Gilchrist's novel on *The Annunciation*, more intelligently announces a coming birth to the mother, to Amanda herself, "the gray-blue virgin" (279). She wears, as too many of Gilchrist's characters do, blue and white, "the virgin's colors" (279), in fond evocation perhaps of the Farival twins in *The Awakening* (just how these Farival twins might be related to Adrienne Farival of "Lilacs" is unclear), similarly clad in blue and white and forever repeating their piano lessons after "having been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin at their baptism" (Chopin, *Awakening* 69).

St. Luke's report on the annunciation to Mary (Lk 1.26-38) leaves us with many divisions: God's certain plan for Mary alongside Mary's confusion, God's will and Mary's surrender, Mary's virginity and her pregnancy, the power of the Holy Spirit and the lowliness of the maiden whom he will "overshadow" (Lk 1.35). Nothing in Mary's apparent actions brings about the conception of Jesus. She does not choose but is chosen; the overshadowing, intrusive power of a male God requires this role of Mary beyond her will and her sexuality. She is chosen as womb and passively responds as a servant, not as one who shares in power.

Ironic divisions mark Kate Chopin's use of the matter of the Annunciation in "Lilacs" and other works, notably in *The Awakening*. There, Chopin's turning of the matter of the annunciation on end occurs clearly in the description of Edna's birthday dinner:

> But as she sat there amid her guests, she felt the old ennui overtaking her; the hopelessness which so often assailed her, which came upon her like an obsession, like something extraneous, independent of violation. It was something which *announced* itself; a chill breath that seemed to issue from some vast cavern wherein discords wailed. There came over her the acute longing which always summoned into her spiritual vision the presence of the beloved one, overpowering her at once with a sense of the unattainable. (145, my emphasis)

What was hope in the Biblical Annunciation is here hopelessness and ennui; the intrusion from the outside is not of divine benevolence, but of obsession and of discord; the heavenly wind heralding the presence of the Spirit and of God's messenger is here a chill breath from a hellish place; and the desire for union with the beloved, so much the matter of spirituality and of the Virgin Mary's surrender to God's will, proves here unattainable and forebodes death. The annunciation to Edna that summons "into her spiritual vision the presence of the beloved one" is the same annunciation, followed by the same sad hopelessness, that the nuns in "Lilacs" know in the springtime when they look for "the coming of those they love" (131).

Chopin's "Lilacs" turns directly to the story of the Annunciation and its implications for women. The story's Adrienne Farival, Parisian actress/singer, yields each spring to the desire awakened in her by the smell of lilacs. That smell drives her to return with a generous gift to her girlhood convent school. There she lives in community with the sisters and enjoys particularly the companionship of Sister Agathe. Two weeks then go by, and Adrienne returns to her rather frivolous life in Paris.

What was hope in the Biblical Annunciation is here hopelessness and ennui; the intrusion from the outside is not of divine benevolence, but of obsession and of discord; the heavenly wind heralding the presence of the Spirit and of God's messenger is here a chill breath from a hellish place; and the desire for union with the beloved, so much the matter of spirituality and of the Virgin Mary's surrender to God's will, proves here unattainable and forebodes death.

Reminders of the Annunciation shape this story in its consideration of the division between religious and secular women, between the spiritual and the physical. Chopin has Adrienne and Sister Agathe hear the Angelus bell together as they walk, and together they recite the prayer commemorating the Annunciation to Mary:

> At the sound both women instinctively sank to their knees, signing themselves with the sign of the cross. And Sister Agathe repeated the customary invocation, Adrienne responding in musical tones: 'The Angel of the lord declared unto Mary,/ And she conceived by the Holy Ghost--./ (137)

That spiritual and prayerful bond between the women gives way immediately to the night-time preparations for bed and all the sensuous and sensual details of that common ritual. The sacred and the sensual commingle in a scene of barely restrained desire. Emily Toth argues that in "Lilacs" Chopin had not yet had the "radical thought that nuns had not truly surrendered their earthly desires and human passions" (Intro xx). "Lilacs," though, does portray an emerging sensuality, earthly desire, and passion in the two women and in their rela-

tionship with each other. We witness Adrienne's "subtle and naive pleasure" in preparing for the "spotless bed" (virginal, unstained, should we say?) in the equally immaculate white room (137). Likewise, Sister Agathe indulges a secret pleasure (138) in watching Adrienne and her schoolgirl habits (and Chopin the humorist obviously intends the pun). As an aid to the sleepless Adrienne, Agathe proposes a Hail Mary and prays that the Holy Virgin will guard her (138). Emily Toth's biography of Kate Chopin relates the delightful story of a woman who may well have been something of a model for the character of Sister Agathe, alongside Kitty Garesche,[1] to be sure (*Chopin* 75). That woman was Kate's beloved teacher, Mary Philomena O'Meara, at the school with the tall lilac bushes (Toth, *Chopin* 84), the Academy of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis. In her lonely childhood, the future nun "sometimes took a statue of the Virgin Mary to bed with her for companionship" (Toth, *Chopin* 75). Here in "Lilacs" Sister Agathe sends Adrienne off to sleep with the same companionship.

Beneath the platitudes of a privileged secular life--the annoying manners of domestic workers, the noise of city streets, the demands of career--which Adrienne voices and beneath the platitudes of religious life--the orderly habits, the performance of good works, the reliance on prayer--lies the carefully hidden world of desire. Chopin mocks the surface details of women's lives when lived without acknowledgement of desire, both spiritual and physical, whether inside or outside the convent.

Chopin shows both convent and secular worlds to be worlds of rituals so removed from meaning as to be able to bury physical and spiritual longing and satisfaction. So, the convent denizens say Hail Mary's to put themselves to sleep and pass their hours putting up sacred images and statues and adorning them on feast days with costly decorations like the necklace Adrienne offered as one of her annual gifts. The character of Sophie, Adrienne's maid in Paris, is a vehicle Chopin uses to highlight the vanity of both worlds. For Sophie is a secular version of the sisters. Just as they have "white-capped heads" (132), so Sophie stands before Adrienne with "her white starched cap quivering with each emphatic motion of her grizzled head" (139). Sophie's endless chatter is a "litany" (141) the likes of which the sisters might even have recited. And the "bottle of Château Yquem and a biscuit" (141) that Adrienne asks Sophie to serve may well be a profanation of the Eucharist the nuns receive daily.

Both worlds indeed seem profane, vacuous, mindless in mutual illumination. All that may render them worthy, even holy, is an integration of spiritual and physical desire and a sanctioned expression thereof The Virgin Mary myth has served to divide women from such harmony, and in "Lilacs" it serves the same function, carefully disrupting the integrated self, parting the spiritual and physical selves. Agathe and Adrienne live at those two poles, one devoted to spirituality, the other to the seemingly carnal and venal life of the stage in Paris.

Attention to a polarity between the woman in the convent and the actress recall *Sylvie* by Gérard de Nerval. The parallels suggest that Chopin may have known Nerval's novella. The narrator in *Sylvie* divides women's selves into bodiless spirits and spiritually dead bodies. He sees the character Adrienne only as the "esprit" (608) she plays in a village festival or as "fantôme" (597), as a transfigured being, transfigured at least beyond her body. He toys, importantly here as we read "Lilacs," with the confusion of actress and nun, realizing his love for Aurélie the actress has its origin in his love for Adrienne, a woman exiled to religious life by her family. He puzzles over the confusion, as he brings the two women together in his mind: "Aimer une religieuse sous la forme d'une actrice!...et si c'était la même" (597). In contrast, the narrator sees Sylvie only as body, initially indifferent to concerns of the intellect and the spirit. His vision eventually integrates the two selves.

Together at the convent on Adrienne's annual visits, Agathe and Adrienne test the possible union of their disparate lives. So both nun and secular woman appear to await a birth of a new sisterhood, uniting women divided by and institution: the nuns are "expectant" (132) and Adrienne herself as a "rounded" figure (131).

Nonetheless, they evoked the Mother Superior's denunciation of Adrienne and her piacular gifts, leaving to Adrienne the physical life, to Agathe cloistered spirituality, to both rejection, loss, and sorrow.

The rigid lines separating the secular and the religious may yet yield to the hope of an attainable union with the beloved. Established borders, at least in "Lilacs," do get crossed. The reader and the nuns awaiting Adrienne first see her "*crossing* the beautiful lawn that sloped up to the convent" (131, my emphasis). And the nuns transgress boundaries in kind:

> Sister Agathe, more daring and impulsive than all, descended the steps and flew across the grass to meet her [Adrienne]. What embraces, in which the lilacs were crushed between them! What ardent kisses! What pink flushes of happiness mounting the cheeks of the two women! (132)

The Mother Superior exercises more control: her "dignity

would not permit her to so much as step outside the door of her private apartments" (132). In contrast to this character's severe restraint, again and again Chopin insists that borders be challenged and crossed. So Agathe and Adrienne linger "long upon the foot-bridge that spanned the narrow stream which divided the convent grounds from the meadow beyond" (137). The borders are the institutional ones between the secular and the religious, the erotic ones between woman and woman, the psychological ones within each of us between the physical and the spiritual. Both nun and woman of the stage strain at the limits.

> When the day of her [Adrienne's] departure came, sister Agathe was not satisfied to say good-bye at the portal as the others did. She walked down the drive beside the creeping old cabriolet, chattering her pleasant last words. And then she stood--it was as far as she might go--at the edge of the road, waving good-bye in response to the fluttering of Adrienne's handkerchief. (138-39)

A year later, on her way to the final visit, Adrienne anticipates happily "the warmth and tenderness" of Sister Agathe's embrace (144). But in the end, borders are closed, heavy keys in great locks denying entrance to Adrienne and sealing off forever the lives and love of the two women on orders from the Mother Superior.

Signs at the convent obviously had portended ill for bonds between women: a picture of the Sacré Coeur had replaced that of Catherine of Siena; St. Joseph's mantle had fresh paint making the neglected Virgin Mary's statue seem "dingy" (132). And the distinctly non-maternal Mother Superior in her closeted dignity remained rigid, unaffectionate, cold, and hidden behind the masks of learning and convention.

In Kate Chopin's work, hope for links between secular and religious women does exist. Agathe and Adrienne's love for each other grew despite the poor environment: their physical gestures of affection were genuine and tender. Nonetheless, they evoked the Mother Superior's denunciation[3] of Adrienne and her piacular gifts, leaving to Adrienne the physical life, to Agathe cloistered spirituality, to both rejection, loss, and sorrow. Elmo Howell sees the grief at the end as the expression of the loss of two worlds, the sensual and the spiritual, that are "not compatible" (108). And, in a similar commentary on the ending, Helen Taylor writes that

> the story...underlines the irreconcilable differences between the two opposing social constructions of femininity and female erotic feeling, while allowing the images of weeping nun and scattered lilac blossoms to suggest a more diffuse and incontainable notion of desire. (154)

The secular and the religious women are left with an unhealed division, a sense of shame, and the need for expiation we find in Tennyson's Guinevere as the abbess who transmutes her carnality into spirituality. Wholeness and well-being, redemption and salvation: these are the promise of the Annunciation. In "Lilacs" Kate Chopin questions whether such a promise is available to women separated from each other on the basis of chastity.

NOTES

[1] I remember especially the poem "To the Friend of My Youth: To Kitty," in which Kate Chopin links her soul to Kitty's in a "mystic garland.../Of scented *lilac* and the new-blown rose" (*Works* 735, my emphasis).

[3] Thomas Bonner, Jr., is right in arguing against Per Seyersted's reading: "Per Seyersted notes that Adrienne's dismissal occurred because news of her exotic life as an opera singer in Paris reached the Mother Superior. It is more likely that she perceived the change in Sister Agathe" (283). Peggy Skaggs (42) and Barbara Ewell (91), however, also argue that the denunciation results from the Mother Superior's discovery of the kind of life Mme. Farival leads in Paris. Barbara Ewell emphasizes Adrienne's "childish character" (91), "duplicity" (91), and "irresponsibility" (92).

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The Little Details of Our Lives
by Deborah Straw

My best friend moved away six months ago. Since that time, life hasn't been the same in many ways. One of the things I most miss are our highly-detailed, conversations.

Like most women, I love recalling and recounting the minute details of my experiences. The color, texture, length of time, angle of light - all these are important to me when I remember an event.

After a visit to a friend, I don't merely form an overview of the trip, I want to relive it in all its smallest particulars. I remember what we talked about, the pattern on the china, what time we had tea, the types of birds on the feeder, what kind of cheese we ate with our crackers. And I want to share this. Mitzi, for one, always loved to hear my stories and even seemed gratifyingly enthralled.

This might be considered small talk, but I see this as essential talk, part of what May Sarton has eloquently termed, "the sacramentalization of everyday life." We women like, in fact, need, to celebrate these important things.

My husband, a sensitive man who is, in most other ways, a good storyteller, does not care at all for these tiny, everyday details. He finds them boring.

This behavior seems to run true in most women and men that I know. I tested my theory out on some of my writing students. The women wanted to hear more descriptive details in their classmates' papers; the men felt there were enough, if not too many.

Of course, most men do love sharing facts and statistics about cars, sports, radios or cameras or about daring, external adventures. But they generally don't want to speak about their internal lives or everyday activities.

After returning from a recent trip to a dear, not-often-seen friend, my mind was brimming over with hundreds of tiny reminiscences. I recalled our 7 p.m. dinner, going to bed early to read, how the long-haired cat rubbed against my dark pants, how he growled at me once, the taste of the apple pie we had for dessert and the excellent before-lunch sherry. I remembered our conversation was interrupted by the telephone four times, and I thought back to the color and smell of the miniature carnations in my bedroom.

My hostess' light tan pajamas were elegant, as were her lush blue bath towels. The paintings on the guestroom's walls--two tiny portraits and an oil landscape of lobstermen with nets--were delightful. The antique dark cherry bureau reminded me of one I coveted last spring in Paris. I also adored her bedspreads--two luxurious mohair hand-woven throws from Ireland, which the pampered cat has obviously used on occasion for a scratching post.

These details help illuminate my friend's personality and help me visualize her daily life. By remembering them, I can relive the wonderful time we spent together. What was significant to me in these hours?

In this particular trip, the critical moments included laughing over a comment on a videotape, agreeing on the tragic plight of African elephants, and discussing how to eliminate gray squirrels from our bird-feeders. We traded new favorite book titles, and we discussed the necessity of a good wine with dinner.

If my husband, never terribly verbose, came home from such a weekend, he'd say, "We had a good time, We ate broiled chicken, drank some Scotch, and got along well. It rained the whole time, and I slept like a baby." Just the highlights.

I find this frustrating. Where does he process all the lovely, small, intimate details? What was served with the chicken? What brand was the Scotch? What kind of pillow, feather or foam, did his bed have? Did the wind blow the rain along the ocean or into his second-story window? What books were by his bed, and which did he read before turning out his light? Did he dream?

All these tidbits are important and can be discussed happily by women for hours at a time. Most women, but not all. Some women stretch this penchant for telling all until their stories become merely mundane.

For example, I think of one woman's conversation which centers around other people's occupations, possessions, and dialogues. She tells exactly who did what, when. This bores me. Unless it's talk of one of my favorite relatives or friends, someone from whom I might learn something. When she starts talking, my mind wanders to plans for dinner or to organizing the weekend's events.

Give me the friend who spins a tale well, or the friend, like Mitzi, who will listen to my lengthy stories.

I believe we are defined by what we read, by what we eat, by what we observe, and by how we respond to these things.

The wonder of a well-crafted scene in a novel, the taste of a lovingly-prepared meal, the call of the male cardinal in late winter--anyone who has acknowledged a deep life within and without can relate to these experiences and the sensations they evoke.

As far as I'm concerned, the more of these minutiae we recall and relate, the better. Maybe this is because I'm a writer and want to record them all, in my journal or at least in my mind.

But perhaps it's also because I have discovered that everyday life is the best that it gets--that this is what really matters.

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The Question of the Personal: "Woman" in the Academy

by Carol L. Winkelmann

Recently, as I drove across town to the conservative midwestern university where I teach, I listened to a local rock station. This was a rare event. I usually listen to carefully selected compact discs: ones reflecting my own tastes, preferences, and understandings of music. The rock station reminded me that my taste in music--like my feminist vision--even in this day and age, is somewhat uncommon. I was disabused once again of the notion that the world dutifully trails along after theorists, teachers, and other do-gooders.

The moment of enlightenment began mundanely enough. A pair of Cincinnati rock station disc jockeys spun off a series of anti-gay jokes. The topic: WGAY, a new lesbian radio station in Denver. After a series of sarcastic jokes constructed from stereotypes of the physical appearances of lesbians, the two men called the Denver station and spoke to a WGAY disc jockey. On the surface, the conversation was amicable. As soon as the phone hit the cradle, however, the two homophobes burst out laughing. Then they turned their attention to asthmatics. No surprises in the city of the Robert Maplethorpe conflict.

I feel stifled, of course. In a matter of minutes, the dirty duo managed to strangle my delicate sensibilities. Then I arrive at school. On campus, my *Other*-ness is simply "biological." I am woman. At a small, private, conservative university, this is enough.

I am going to describe what I have learned and painfully re-learned about what it means to be a woman at the university. No theoretical surprises here. Simply talk about what it means to experience the academy as a woman in a world where "backlash" means nothing because the new world order never arrived. I want to talk about what it means to be a woman in this setting. One woman. I am also teacher, researcher, and linguist. But, in the space of this text, I will construct myself as woman; later, I assume, I'll be deconstructed in your discussions.

In this construction/deconstruction business, however, women have had much *too much* assistance in the past. The WGAY disc jockey was only one example. My concern here is women in the academy. Women in academia--like women in general--have been categorized, named, labeled. (Then shrunk, shelved, deleted, or disappeared.) But the descriptors for women are many, and they are easily re-activated or transliterated--from the biological to the social, from the professional to the political. For academia, women are or have been considered too frail, too fragile, too shy, too dependent, too emotional, too dispersed, too preoccupied, too bitchy, too hostile, too sexual, too coy. These personal labels can be traced throughout the historical records: the anecdotes of the past, you might say. And now I am here to tell you my anecdotes.

We know, of course, that the meaning of things is not locked into historical records. The meaning of things is constructed in human interpretive processes, in highly *personal* and contextualized *processes.* So what it means to be a woman in the academy is not locked into my own historical record so much as it is in how you are going to construct me as a woman out of the context of what *you* believe a woman or a woman in the academy is or should be; that is, out of *your* personal experience and knowledge, out of *your* anecdotes: not simply and solely out of mine. The same is true of my students in general: in part, they will make of me what they have been predisposed to make of me.

This is not to say that it's not useful to gather to discuss personal anecdotes. In the end, however, because the making of meaning is the way it is, YOU WILL DECIDE--largely--whether it is, in fact *coy* of me to begin with some anecdotes not from my own life in the academy as a woman, but some anecdotes about the lives of some *men* in the academy. These are true stories.

*

Anecdote 1

This is from a recent story in a Cincinnati daily newspaper: it was discovered that an entomologist in Washington DC, Harrison Gray Dyar, Jr. a well-respected Smithsonian scholar, deceased in 1929--had dug (literally--dug) a series of mysterious, inexplicable tunnels beneath his backyard, tunnels which fan out some 200 feet out from his house. He secretly dug these tunnels and even finished them with cement walls. No one knows quite why he had done this, but the scholarly conjectures fly: was he involved in top secret or forbidden research? Did he have a secret, second family--complete with wife and kids--who actually lived in the tunnels and whom he clandestinely visited? Or was he just a plain old crazy kook? Maybe he thought he was an ant.

*

Anecdote 2

Now in the days before the computer, lexicography was a kind of work-at-home or home scriptorium job. (This, by the way, is one of the reasons why there were so many women involved in the compilation of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, who were, not surprisingly, unacknowledged). So no one even noticed that C.T. Onions, the very famous lexicographer--one of those towering, lofty, scholarly figures who edited the *Oxford English Dictionary*--was severely agoraphobic. He didn't want to leave his house. He had "an abnormal fear of crossing or of being in open or public place" (W9NCD). and no one even noticed this until, after years of working at home on the dictionary under dropping, peeling, crumbling

paint, Onions had to be shoved from room to room while the house painters came in to repaint the walls and ceilings. He was such a phobic that he would not even leave the house for the painters.

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Now, I'd like to suggest that what is so amusing and awful about these anecdotes (because while we do laugh, I believe we all recognize that there is something vaguely, but actually, awful about these anecdotes) is that they disrupt our sense, and the public discourse, about the scholarly life and the concept of the "academic."

(And just as an aside: I do recognize that there is quasi-public or semi-submerged discourse about the archetypal "looney" professor. Now the looney or absent-minded professor (as we all know) is male. And so I'd also like to suggest that these stories may well be more awful to women than men or to anyone who is trying to gain stature or simply to *locate* herself or himself in academia and who may be having nightmares in the dark hours about discovering oneself naked in public.

Okay, so how do these anecdotes disrupt? They disrupt because they break the pragmatic, public, or political rule of male-driven, academic discourse that reads something like this: *the personal and the professional are not to be related publicly.* For "professional" here, we can plug in any one of many familiar descriptors--intellectual, objective, detached, non-affective, impersonal....Of course, every rule has an exception. In this case, it's a gendered exception, and I'd like to talk about that shortly. Yet this is the basic rule: the personal and the professional are not to be related.

But these two men--the lexicographer and the entomologist--were so embarrassingly human! And their stories are disruptive, I'd like to suggest, because they occupy a space in the gap we like to maintain between some of our treasured dichotomies: the personal and the professional, the public and the private, the rational and the irrational, the emotional and the reasonable. Once the gap is filled in with some *hard* existential evidence--say, in the form of concrete-lined tunnels zigzagging from POINT A (that is, the entomologist's public life *above* the ground) to POINT B (that is, the entomologist's private life *under* the backyard)--once that gap is filled with evidence like this, these dichotomies can be seen for what they really are: word games maintained to keep lexicographers constructed as lexicographers (as Samuel Johnson put it--"harmless drudges") and entomologists constructed as entomologists and *not as* people who are irrational, unreasonable, thus irresponsible (that is, irresponsible in the sense of "not capable of public responsibility"). It is necessary to keep the agoraphobiacs hidden away in their houses, to see only the legendary lexicographers. The distance between the public and the private must be maintained at all costs, it seems--even if it means constructing hidden, secret tunnels.

Yes, it is my experience (with respect to male-oriented academia) that *the personal* is constantly denied. And the *personal as political* is absolutely rejected by all except those academics and scholars--men and women--who understand the meaning of the phrase "the politics of language."

So, in the end, I delight in these anecdotes about Harrison Gray Dyar and C.T. Onions because they disrupt the word game. They make visible what is usually invisible. These guys were painfully, simply human. Their stories make plain the secret: the professional is always underpinned, traversed, crossed, informed, by the personal. Professionals are people, with personal histories and lives. Their human anecdotes, however odd, inform their scholarship and shape their relations with colleagues and students--whether we admit it or not.

In the private conversations of women academics, and in women's studies courses, and in women-oriented scholarship, the truth about this is recognized. Women do recognize the personal in the professional. And women do tell their personal stories: in conversation, in research, to colleagues and students. I teach a good women's literature course because I can offer so many personal examples for so many theoretical issues. This is healthy, of course.

The problem is this: many of these same examples demonstrate that the basic rule about keeping the professional and the personal separate is consistently violated. For example, I can share with my students this personal story: contrary to the male professors at the universities which I have attended or visited over the years, many women professors were known *not* as exemplary women scholars--available as mentors and models; instead, they were known by highly charged names: the Queen Bee, the Dragon Lady, the Prima Donna, the Salon Whore. Sometimes the names they were called by others were generic: they were hostile, bitchy, mean. Sometimes they were given politically sexualized names: lessies, dykes, queers. All of these names are low, personal blows. Just saying these things out loud creates a highly charged, dangerous atmosphere in some settings--such as the university where I now teach.

So the dichotomies are useful, after all. They are used in various ways for cultural-ideological/socio-political purposes. To put it bluntly: the dichotomies are used to keep women academics separated from male academics and ill-at-ease in the academic community, on guard, on the alert, dis-located. I don't have to remind you which half of the dichotomies are attributed to women. Intentionally proffered or not, conscious or not, the dichotomies are at the service of gender-gradations and inequities in our notions of knowledge and our view of the proper way to "be" or "do" the academy.

The upshot? Apparently there's a different rule as far as women academics are concerned. When the topic is a woman academic, the rule reads: *use the personal to defuse the professional.*

Other evidence for the existence of this (is it a woman-only?) rule can be found in the grievances common to women academics. They are told in personal stories. There are common themes. They come to me--over and over again--through the words of women I don't know: I read their books, articles, stories. The themes also come drifting to me from the past--women who have worked at this university before me. The keywords are:

overachievement
under-recognition
incommensurate family responsibilities
incommensurate pay
incommensurate promotion
harassment: sexual and verbal
violence: sexual and verbal
good girl
bad girl
coffee girl
no history
no models
no voice
isolation
alienation
dis-location

Of course, by now, we know this litany too well. We've all known for some time that the separation of the personal and professional is an illusion. Yet, my experience as a teacher, researcher, colleague, linguist and, by the way, as mother, wife, woman in the academy, also suggests that--in the case of women--the exception to the rule is too frequently applied. It is alive and well. I experience it daily in the academy. Perhaps we don't talk about that enough. Because of the way women are constructed by others, the university is not always a supportive place, a place which facilitates the "pursuit" of knowledge.

Right now, in my career, I'm in a front row seat for watching how the politics of language works in regard to the construction of Other. I want to offer an example which demonstrates the typical obliqueness of the process-at-work: I am a new professor in my department. I watch with real interest (as a linguist, that is) and some degree of trepidation, as my colleagues (who are generally quite friendly) try to define me, name me: who is this new kid on the block? One of my favorite examples of this process: I have been repeatedly defined as "the working class" woman.

Now, I'm not even sure where this one comes from except that--it's true--I was born in Detroit. In actuality, I grew up in suburbia and graduated from a somewhat affluent suburban high school. My father has never been anything other than a white-collared, briefcase-swinging accountant-type. In other words, I am about as boringly middle-class as a person can get. But *there's got to be a reason* why I--a woman--speak so darn directly about things, why I won't fit into the stereotypes, or the social construction, of what woman in the academy is all about. *She must be working class: part of that unruly, undisciplined, unreasonable, mob. What do (working class) women really want!* I guess I'll just have to step in line and take my whats-comings: a label, so that I can be constructed and then deconstructed. Defused, you might say. More generously: understood.

But I need to get myself out of this tunnel I've dug for myself! I've argued, in short, that women in the academy are constructed as Other by others--and the premiere strategy is to "get down" and get personal. What makes the anecdotes of the genders different in academia is how gender differences get constructed. Gender is socially constructed. And the way in which it is constructed gets quite personal for women in the academy.

The practical implications? As I've implied, all aspects of women's experience at the university are affected. There's a whole woman-oriented literature--hot off the press--demonstrating just how poorly women have fared (still fare!) in terms of full-time appointments, full professorial appointments, laurels for research, perks, privileges, power, etc.... It affects more than pay and promotion. As we know, the general climate at the university is subtly or blatantly, inhospitable to women, especially for those involved in women studies or women-oriented scholarship.

This taints teacher-student relationships and collegial relationships. Who wants her or his prestige or respectability to be threatened by a person who is marginalized herself in the community?

In an attempt to mitigate the sheer awfulness of this situation, I've read and heard others maintain this: *well, this inhospitable university environment sets up a "creative tension." Women produce good scholarship not just in spite of the inhospitality, but in sheer spite of it.* This reasoning--I believe--is perverse. The human spirit does indeed always rise to the challenge, but women academics would fare much better--I'm certain--in fully supportive environments.

Apart from these unhappy implications, some of the theoretical issues interest me. I'd like to suggest two such issues.

First, the stories of the lexicographer and the entomologist make clear this message: not any of us can separate the personal from the professional--men or women, overtly or covertly. And we shouldn't deceive ourselves into thinking we can. All our dealings--with colleagues, with students, with administrators, with texts--are highly affective, highly personal, highly political. Life at the academy is highly charged! We have our attractions and our distractions. We are impelled, compelled, not to mention--repelled, sometimes expelled. When we sit across meeting tables from colleagues we have headaches and heartaches. Personal family issues crowd in on us. We have our fears and our fantasies. And all of these are pushing and pulling on our professional lives. This is the human condition, not the woman condition. We all have our secrets, our ecstasies, our emergencies, our tunnels, our terrors. What condition

did that lexicographer have? Fear of life in public, in open-spaces? It happens when the personal and professional are kept artificially separate.

This is what women in the academy know. They've learned it the hard way.

The second theoretical issue is this. To turn my last point inside out: given that the personal is so frequently used against the professional woman at the academy, it seems quite ironic really that I--a professional academic woman--should be asked so frequently to tell my personal anecdotes in public. Gender and ethnicity panels are routine academic business. Forums for formulating our personal stories are ever-popular. Yet, there is no safe place for women. Most likely, the WGAY disc jockey didn't realize she was being baited by the Cinti homophobes as she told her story, as she expressed her personal feelings about the birth of her radio station. She probably had no idea she was as immediately and directly vulnerable as she was, in fact. Her audience was primed. Her story had been embellished by a series of homophobic sneers.

Telling stories is always an act of vulnerability. Even here *you* are being allowed to construct and deconstruct *me*. I tell my stories and you are allowed to observe. Perhaps you are simply voyeurs! Somewhat agoraphobicly, I tried to veil myself by offering you stories of male academics instead. But, in the end, the anecdotes are all mine. Those here who are at the center of the academia or the academic text will only be able to see that the folks at the margins are actually central to the text itself when all of us, all men and women, when *you yourselves* cast off the agoraphobia and come out into the open. So, I don't really mean to be coy when I ask: anecdotes, anyone? Testimonials, stories, or confessions? Where are *yours*?

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In this variation of the traditional tale, both are fully developed people. Each embodies mind and soul, each is brilliant and sensitive, giving and receptive. Vincent reads poetry, tends outcast children, heals the wounded. Katherine lives in the larger world, the skyscraper world of accomplishment and prestige, while Vincent makes an underworld (a brilliant image of the unconscious) in tunnels beneath the city, hiding from those above.

The strong subtext of the television series seems to be that these two belong together; these two love bravely and deeply, despite the struggle. We cannot imagine that Vincent and Katherine will live "happily ever after." Keeping what they have takes work and care and courage, and there is always danger. At the same time, the program, via good scripting and intelligent acting, makes clear that what these two have is worth the effort. The integration of opposites within the psyche is a lifelong task, not something accomplished and completed, like learning "Fur Elise" or mastering Lotus 1-2-3.

Out of all this talk of fairy tales, what can we take to the classroom? First, a clear vision of the power of images. Via poetry and pictures, legends and myths, photographs and songs, images often reach places that facts and statistics and logic cannot touch. Images of fully-realized men and women are empowering, life-giving. Second, it may be useful to hold tenaciously to the Beast's warning: "A rose that's cut can only die." As living creatures, we have our roots beneath the ground, in the dark, in the dirt, amid the worms and the maggots and the slugs., To pretend otherwise is to risk losing the authentic self, to turn away from the Shadow. We have thorns, which can pierce and draw blood. And we have petals, soft, perfumed, and beautiful. Theorists and practitioners emphasize that as long as we do not cut ourselves off from any part of ourselves, we can grow and thrive. but cut off from any part of ourselves, the result is a soul-death.

As I see things after rethinking this fabled story, the wedding of Beauty and the Beast in our world has not yet happened, but the engagement is still on.

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"Teaching Ain't No Joke": A Response

by Allison McCormack and Kathryn C. Lacey

Do you remember when *MS* magazine ran its column on "clicks"? Just in case you don't: A "click" was a not-so-minor epiphany that made us fully conscious of the extent to which women were devalued. The usual reaction to a "click" combined frustration and outrage. Well, "Teaching Ain't No Joke" (*WILLA*, Fall 1992) was more a thunderclap than a click for us and for many of the colleagues, both male and female, with whom we shared the article.

Lana Hartman Landon has beautifully defined a major problem for many female professors (and for many administrators too, probably)--an academic version of "the problem that has no name." And Landon doesn't pass the buck to the system, society, the academy, or our male colleagues. Rather, she points out that too many women have assumed the role of the domestic engineers of the classroom, however unconsciously we may have done so. It's a tough pill to swallow that we cast ourselves into these parts that have become almost second nature for women in the academy. And, to make the pill even more bitter, we've done this to ourselves, social conditioning notwithstanding.

Let's first add to Landon's examples of situations in which women professors become, as she aptly puts it, "angels in the classroom."

For example, there are those independent reading seminars we've offered during the summer, effectively teaching a class of one, so that a student can graduate on schedule. And when we do this, we may often effectively compromise our own research. But the kids come first. Click.

Or there's the frequent neurotic insistence that students not be held in suspense about the fate of their work. Cruel to keep them anxious, we say, so due dates are carefully engineered so that material can be returned the next class period. The result? Students don't seem to notice, and we find ourselves wailing that classes "take [us] for granted." Sound familiar? Click.

Look, for instance, how much we women tend to want our students to feel that they can approach us to discuss their work, that we're available for one to one conferences. So we frequently turn from the computer screen or from the book we've set aside time to use in the library to answer a question or discuss a revision. And no, we're not talking about regularly scheduled office hours, either. We shouldn't be putting our work ahead of the kids, should we? (and isn't there a tendency to say MY kinds?) That would be selfish, correct? After all, could our work be as important, perhaps, as their needs? Click.

Granted, this "student-centered" approach to teaching is given a great deal of lip-service these days. (Whether it is rewarded is another matter, of course). It works best when class size is minimal and the teacher's course load is small. In graduate school where the seeds are planted, it is possible to schedule those individual conferences with students twice a semester as well as to schedule in personal class and research time. Meeting the needs of the many and the self are better achieved in this controlled setting. After graduation, we pull full classes, overloaded with students, and the pressing task of meeting hundreds of needs simply overwhelms our own research and ambition.

Current pedagogy aside, the choice to be a nurturing professor is ultimately our own. We are consciously making decisions everyday that prioritize our students' work over ours. We frequently do this in courses that are not even new preparations. But is it really necessary for us to re-read and re-annotate the novel we've taught ten times? And, really, how labor-intensive are all the reading quizzes we prepare (a new one every semester, of course) and grade, to make certain the students keep up with the reading? Do we need to give one every class? We probably feel guilty if we don't: then, it is probably our fault if a student doesn't do the work, right? What about his/her own responsibility to be a student in the first place? Click.

Now, don't misunderstand. Most of us do not see ourselves as martyrs. Or, if we do, it's an unconscious view. Frankly, on the rare occasions when we come down hard in advocating for our right to be a scholar too, we frequently feel guilty for being selfish. And we hate feeling guilty. This statement is what makes this a gender issue, apparently. When men are non-nurturing, but effective teachers and prioritize their own careers, they are satisfied. Many women we know, however, who prioritize their careers and down-play their role in the classroom often feel great guilt over this decision as does any mother who "can't have it all." It is only recently that many of us realize to what extent we take on this nurturing role and what a tough burden it is to shake. (And how beneficial for students is it, really, to believe that since Mommy's there, they will be cared for? Are we refusing to let our kids grow up? Are we keeping them dependent?)

If you have ever functioned in an administrative capacity, you have probably realized that "administration ain't no joke," either. We women too often extend our families to include our colleagues, as well as our students. And when we have a family, we nurture it, correct?

Why? Why do so many of us do this? Of course teaching well is of paramount importance. So is being an ethical administrator who doesn't abuse what power she has. We don't want to feel the quilt of being derelict. Certainly when graduate students (of both sexes) take courses in the teaching of composition, they are encouraged to be nurturing and supporting of their classes. But is it accidental that composition and rhetoric is an area of the profession where women outnumber men?

Probably not.

This all sounds dangerously like the idea that in order to feel good about ourselves, we go for what Landon cited as the "immediate value" inherent in the belief that good women are those who are good mothers, the nurturers, the selfless. We believe this is what we carry with us at some level. Even some women who consciously decide not to appear nurturing in the classroom, are ultimately perceived that way by students. Why? Perhaps because it is a conditioned belief that on some level, women will be mother figures, regardless of their individual behavior.

It occurred to us that, decades ago, the only women allowed to teach were single, young, and of course, virginal in demeanor and appearance, if not practice. One reason for this was to take advantage of their supposedly "untapped" nurturing instincts and to channel them into the classroom for the students' benefit. Perhaps it was here that women outside of family roles learned that the "immediately consumable" can feed into an under-nourished self-esteem. While the school boards and administrations have changed the criteria since, perhaps on some level, many of us have not changed our need to be savior, heroine, and angel. In any economy, the immediately consumable always feels immediately most useful.

What's key in the whole issue is exposing our own choices, priorities, and comfort zones. We need to continue as Landon has and not blame culture and history but accept our own sense of agency. Dare we suggest that men often manage to teach extremely well and to be prolific scholars, too? What, perhaps, can we learn from them? Perhaps, we can learn to value ourselves as scholars. Perhaps, we can learn to find the same sense of urgency and responsibility for our own work as we direct toward our classrooms. And with the release of our guilt for not being what we can not be, we will finally---hopefully---stop hearing the click.

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BOOK REVIEWS

***Weaving in the Women*, by Liz Whaley and Liz Dodge. New Hampshire: Boynton/Cook, 1993.**

High School English teachers can welcome a new resource book, by Liz Whaley and Liz Dodge, on strengthening the curriculum with the addition of more books by and about women. *Weaving in the Women*, published by Boynton/Cook, is crammed with ideas and titles, references and suggestions of how-and why-to expand standard materials. They write, "We think the jury is in and that the research is clear on the need for all of us to study about all of us in order to have a fuller understanding of humankind....Those of us who treasure words and books....must continue to demand that women's writing be recorded, published, valued, shared, and taught so that everyone can know the truth of those experiences." (263)

The major portion of the book is devoted to ways of changing and adding to specific high school courses beginning with the 9th and 10th grade, and progressing to American and English Literature courses. This format makes it possible to turn quickly to sections that will be immediately useful to a teacher. Each chapter is rich in specific recommendations, and each includes a Suggested Books for Students list, as well as a list of Useful Books for Teachers, which are often anthologies for further materials or background reading.

The chapters on American Literature (divided into four quarter sections) are especially detailed. The 18th century section begins with strong narrative material on Anne Bradstreet, the poet, and Mary White Rowlandson, an account of her capture by Wampanoags. As in many instances throughout their book, Whaley and Dodge give wonderful stories and anecdotes to enrich their suggestions. They also discuss familiar writings of the American "canon," but re-visioned by the addition of women authors.

One of their common recommendations for making changes is to pair a familiar story with a rediscovered one, such as pairing the tale of "Rip Van Winkle" with "The Revolt of Mother," a 19th century story by Mary Wilkins Freeman. Students may then compare the writers' ideas and points of view and/or ask questions about differences in outlook related to gender issues. Later on, chronologically, stories by Hemingway and Faulkner could be balanced with stories by K.A. Porter or Eudora Welty, and-again-examined for gender differences. For modern American fiction, the authors suggest the addition of such books as *Cold Sassy Tree* and *The Bean Trees*.

The section on English Literature gives several ideas for adding women authors, even for the years prior to 1850. One notable "pairing" is to link the poet Pope with the poet Sarah Egerton, who was writing wonderful couplets in 1703 lamenting the exclusion of women from philosophy, science, and art in "The Emulation." (161) Unexpected ideas such as this one are found throughout the narrative. Some modern English books for study include *The Road to Coorain* and *West with the Night* as

the authors broaden the base of English to include former British colonies or areas of English influence.

In addition to these excellent chapters of specifics for different courses, the authors include a special chapter on the importance of changing methodology as well as content, in order to bring in more student participation. They strongly support the concept of student-centered learning, which is explained in detail, and contrasted with traditional classroom teaching. "In the end, what is gained from weaving in the women is the empowerment of students, female and male. Students get excited about learning and want to know more. They want to make more and more connections to what they've read previously and to their own lives." (259)

Whaley and Dodge also include a chapter on evaluation techniques with many alternatives to traditional tests. They share a variety of ideas for papers and projects that can reveal a student's understanding of the material, and also call for creativity in student responses. an excellent description is given of how to develop an Oral Final Exam.

Yet another chapter takes time to focus on studying women characters in various novels, as drawn by male or female authors. Some of the negative images in Hemingway and Fitzgerald are contrasted with positive portrayals shown in Cather or Hurston.

As a special gift, the authors add a whole chapter outlining an elective on Women's Literature, which, in itself, is worth the price of the book. ($19.50) They include the rationale and general objectives of such a course, as well as dozens of references which would make several summers' worth of fine reading. "Women's literature courses...seek...to claim for women their equal place in the world and to retrieve their accomplishments throughout history so that people can study and evaluate them...(Such courses) should contribute to the emancipation not only of women but of men too, from the rigid roles to which they have been socialized." (217-218)

The concluding Bibliography is of immense help to the searching reader, with a range of further materials to consult. Even the Index is a pleasure to sample, sending the reader to specific items that might otherwise be overlooked.

This book helps resolve the issue of "inclusion." Teachers everywhere can rejoice that much of the work of "how-to-do-it" comes in this resourceful package. Cheers to Liz Whaley and Liz Dodge for their courage and persistence in providing such an outstanding volume.

Margaret Carlson

***Re-Educating the Imagination: Toward a Poetics, Politics, and Pedagogy of Literary Engagement*, by Deanne Bogdan. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/ Cook Publishers, Heinnemann, 1992.**

Deanne Bogdan's work on literary engagement is a densely packed and enormously thoughtful-often passionate, and consistently thorough-consideration of the realm of the imagination in a post-structuralist era. It warrants very special attention and deserves the care required to appreciate its impact.

Bogdan probes deeply issues pertinent to *what* literary texts we teach, (termed a "censorship problem"), *why* we teach them (the "justification problem"), and *how* readers respond to them (the "response problem"). Thus we have three angles of the "meta problem" that frames *Re-Educating the Imagination*. Issues about the texts we teach, why and how we do so are posited as critical variables which are greatly influenced by the contexts in which various literary selections are taught, not to mention the power dynamics and politics of that context, and the often intense and deeply ingrained feelings that teachers and learners bring to text and situation. As a reader of *Re-Educating the Imagination* (whether as literary theorist, researcher, or practitioner), one is likely to respond with gasps of recognition and close attention as Bogdan scrupulously constructs and situates critical assumptions underlying the book. These assumptions are that literary experience is a form of real experience, that literary response is an embodied form of knowledge shaped by each reader's personal and sociopolitical background, and that literature has the power to evoke deep political and social effects.

The title of this book is quite provocative and, no doubt, as painstakingly thought through as the foundation and development of its key premises; our own imaginations are, in fact, being re-educated as we read. We are led to recognize the significance of classroom experiences that, in a feminist and multicultural world we cannot have escaped. The "re-educated imagination" is one that melds the direct and embodied literary response and objective critical response; conjoins the political and the literary; and unites the worlds of ordinary existence and imaginative experience. Without discounting the literary world of imaginative experience and the objectively critical-even anatomical-appraisal of literature (literary literacy), *Re-Educating the Imagination* insists that the flesh and blood, real-life political realities of "ordinary" readers are to be given logical priority and importance. Reader's direct and embodied responses to literature (literary experience) bring us face to face with decisions about what we teach, why, and how, *and* the feelings, power relationships and locations in which that teaching is conducted. Our "re-educated imaginations" are aligned with a Platonic literary universe. According to such a world, the imagination could be all too easily bewitched and thus demoralized by the power of poetry. Censoring, justifying, and responding to literature were, then, matters linked to whether or not and how the literary text represented the values promulgated by "the state." We are led, then, to appreciate Sidney's imaginative domain, wherein literary text is responded to with the assumption that it represents, upholds, and reinforces the ethics and aesthet-

ics of a Christian worldview. And onto Shelley and the Romantics where the literary imagination is broadened to become a world of its own-one less tightly linked to a societal ethic and much more a magical world of its own making. Bogdan then visits the literary critical domain of the man whose work she has studied most closely, Northrop Frye. For him, we learn, the literary text is an order of words, a mythological imagery to which we respond with an "educated imagination"- a detached, objective and critical attention that acquaints itself systematically with the verbal structure as well as the world outside that literary text. It is after these views of the literary imagination are rendered that *Re-Educating the Imagination* becomes most vibrant, most brimming with the passion and verve of the writer's beliefs.

Bogdan tells us that "[p]art of my purpose in writing this book is to make a case for reversing the logical priority of the critical response-on ontological and ethical grounds as well as psychological and pedagogical ones" (p.111). We read about feminist readers who have, with great pain, lived and responded to a life-text that has disenfranchised and angered them. As Deanne Bogdan writes about how such readers respond to *literary* texts that do the same thing, we are brought fully round to an appreciation of literary experience as all too real, literary response as shaped by each reader's personal and sociopolitical background, and the power of the literary text to evoke deep political and social effects. A feminist reader does not accept a literary text that represents a patriarchal "state," nor will she respond with the demure assent that literature reinforces an accepted moral and aesthetic fiber. It is particularly the feminist reader who would read a sexist text and become enraged by it, who would disclaim Frye's educated imagination-an educated imagination that could hold that text at a critical remove and dispassionately critique its mythological order of words. The flesh and blood readers introduced by Deanne Bogdan are the same readers we all work with in our culturally and sociopolitically diverse classrooms. They teach us that literature is not simply an order of words or a keeper of "the" norm; it is virtual experience that can influence for good as well as for ill.As Bogdan puts it, "[i]f the educated imagination positions the reader within the interpretive process of the verbal universe, the re-educated imagination makes the material reality of the reader's subjectivity a primary condition of incarnating the Word" (p. 208).

Re-Educating the Imagination is a probing exploration of the role of the reader set against a detailed backdrop of consideration. Ultimately we are led to recognize the incredible complexity entailed in questioning what literature we teach, why we teach it, and how it should be taught, especially as we follow that "meta-problem" into the post-structuralist territory of feminism. This is an important book.

M. Alayne Sullivan

***Missing Chapters*, Virginia Monseau and Jeanne Gerlach, Eds., NCTE, 1993.**

The effect on future teachers and practicing teachers who use this text will be positive: inspiring and informational. These essays about English educators who are women serve to reinterpret some of English education and the history of the National Council of Teachers of English, precisely because they are about women. Nick Hook points out that the Council was never very sexist, saying that 14 of the 40 presidents between 1929 and 1968 were women, although the Executive Committees had relatively few women in them (*A Long Way Together*, 232). However, what we haven't seen before is what the nature of those experiences was for women who were leaders in the years 1929-1960. It is, therefore, important for our students, both male and female, to read these essays so that they can see what women are like who gain equality with men in the career they have chosen (No, I don't think we have come very far in that regard in either secondary schools or colleges) and so that they will be better able to contribute to the profession and to their own students. This volume may contribute towards women increasing their confidence and participation in controlling what they teach. It is as important for men to read it. Male students represent a small percentage of incoming teachers; however, the two or three males in every methods class carry far more weight than their numbers when they get into secondary schools. Males have generally had more say in curriculum matters and become department heads, curriculum directors, and administrators more quickly than women. This volume may tacitly help males understand that the profession reflects the larger culture in its discrimination against women.

Missing Chapters is good reading, partly because it is various and partly because it shows women in the context of a history that matters to anyone connected to teaching and especially to those who look ahead to the profession of teaching as a powerful mission. The book is various in the ways that it sometimes centers on the women leaders' personal lives, most often of professional lives, and steadily on the issues lived through their publications and activities. One of the authors interviewed Lou LaBrant just after her 100th birthday. And to learn more about Rewey Belle Inglis, Dora V. Smith, Luella B. Cook, and Louise Rosenblatt, for example, is enough justification to read the book all by itself.

This is a very fine volume which at this point only a few of my students have read. All of the readers have been women, and all have liked it very much. This coming winter quarter I plan to use it in my methods class (along with Milner and Milner, *Bridging English* and Christenbury, *Making the Journey*). Our preservice teachers need to know the history of their own profession to learn a significant part of their own origins. I recomment it to you with enthusiasm.

H. Thomas McCracken

***Failing At Fairness How America's Schools Cheat Girls*. Sadker, Myra and David. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1994.**

Throughout the history of American Education, girls and women have worked hard to find equitable educational opportunities. In the earliest times, women were barred from school attendance; however, existing letters and journals dating form the 1700's reveal young women's desires for formal learning. During the past two hundred years the climate appears to have changed radically, and women are able to pursue an education of their choice. But such freedom in choosing does not, the Sadkers caution the readers, result in fair schools. Rather, they warn the audience that today's schoolgirls face subtle and insidious gender discriminations that have a powerful impact on girls' achievements and self esteem.

Drawing on over 25 years of research, the authors show the audience how gender bias in the schools makes it impossible for girls to receive an education equal to boys'. From classroom observations in elementary and secondary schools as well as in colleges and universities, interviews, and individual stories, the Sadkers show the readers how girls are routinely denied opportunities in areas where boys are encouraged to participate and excel. For example, girls and women are often taught to speak quietly, to defer to boys and men, to avoid math and science courses, to value neatness over innovation, appearance over intelligence. As a result, the Sadkers found, that while girls and boys enter school roughly equal in ability levels, by the time they graduate from high school, girls have fallen behind. Girls score lower on standardized tests where high test scores are crucial for entrance into most colleges. College women continue to score lower on all portions of the Graduate Record Exam which is necessary for graduate school admittance, the GMAT for business school, the LSAT for law school, and the MCAT for medical school. The Sadkers' research results indicate that women continue to trail men on most tests because from elementary school through higher education, female students receive less instruction, both in quantity and quality of teacher time and attention.

Sexism at school not only sabotages girls academically, it increasingly complicates their lives in a variety of ways including eating disorders, incidents of school-based sexual harassment, teenage pregnancy followed by school drop out, low self esteem often accompanied by severe depression, and economic penalties after graduation (e.g. low paying jobs, salary discrimination based on gender, etc). What all this means, the Sadkers concur is, "If the cure for cancer is forming in the mind of one of our daughters, it is less likely to become a reality than if it is forming in the mind of one of our sons. Until this changes, everybody loses"(p.14).

Professors Myra and David Sadker have written a candid account of how schools fail girls. They hope that understanding how females have been cheated in the classroom will encourage people to work for change. Readers come to understand that in a society where men and women both make up the labor force, women can no longer be denied an equitable education. "Schools that fail at fairness deny boys a wide range of options and prepare girls for poverty" (P.XI.). the authors are optimistic, however, in their belief that most educators want to provide opportunities for personal and intellectual growth for girls and boys and men and women. The book, then, not only points out the existing classroom inequities, but provides strategies, activities, and other resources designed to help educators succeed at fairness. Much of the effort educators make to accomplish this goal, the Sadkers believe, will determine how we as a nation will thrive in the future.

Jeanne Gerlach

We Remember Skinning Chicken

We are skinning chicken in my mother's kitchen,
sticky wet in July. "We'll make soup from this," she
says, wishing for rain. The blade flashes
along the pale slick of breast, rends
the first fat in a stream of blood down my arm.
"That will scar," she says, "like mine, the one
I got from the kerosene lantern on the mining hat,
reading when candles were dear & electric was out."

Skin slips through my fingers. I tell her
I remember things: a feather ticked bed, her warmth
around me in winter under the tar paper roof
in the shingled shack. She says she can't remember
at 72, but then she remembers: her father,
packing his black bucket, water bottle on the bottom,
fresh slaughtered smoked sausage sandwiched
in still warm baked bread at the top. She remembers
primping for a Jennerstown boy, rubbing
the smell of smoke & onion away with salt
when there wasn't enough milk for the babies. She
says Papa rode the buggy on the rail down to the hole.
He bit the life out of land in Windber's #4, fed pig
gristle to rats who ran warnings when oxygen thinned
before sirens called a cave-in.

Skinny sinews slide through baubles of grease. I cut
my slippery hand again, ask her about the lantern
light, but she tells me about candles, taller than she
was at twelve, circling her young mother's coffin
and the Christmas tree planted in sawdust.
Rubbing her scar, "there was almost a fire," she says,
"when mama's first lover staggered in wailing."
Wincing back tears, she scoops the last glob
into a baggie. "When it cools off," she says,
"during a nice rain, like my mother & I did,
we'll make soup from all this fat."

by Andrena Zawinski

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WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND LIFE ASSEMBLY

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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CALL FOR PAPERS for the fifth issue of *WILLA*, the journal of the NCTE Women in Literature and Life Assembly: The editors encourage varied perspectives, formats, and voices. Contributions should focus on the status and the image of women. Contributions might include critical essays, teaching strategies for all levels, bibliographies, personal essays, and other creative works. Each should be no more than twelve double-spaced, typed pages. Three copies of the submissions should be sent. Include word count and a self-addressed envelope to which stamps are clipped. Please use MLA style. Author's name and institutional affiliation should not appear on the manuscript. Receipt of manuscripts will be acknowledged promptly if a self-addressed stamped card or envelope is included. Deadline for receipt of manuscripts is April 30, 1996. Mail to: *WILLA*, Jo Gillikin, Editor, 380 Riverside Drive, 3F, New York, New York 10025.

WILLA

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from the Editor *Jo Gillikin*

The fourth issue of WILLA arrives at a time when affirmative action is under serious reconsideration, despite the fact that the last thirty years have seen advances for women in all fields, especially as students, teachers, administrators, scholars, writers. There are more texts written by women and more texts with girls as self-actualizing characters. But we have to be careful that "more" is not equated with "token." Remember that gender, knowledge, and democracy are inseparable. Knowledge makes better citizens who make a better democracy, and more than one half of our democracy consists of women whose full participation is guaranteed by our democratic principles. Tillie Olsen's long short story "Tell Me a Riddle" creatively summarizes democracy's aims, for equality and equity always mean "that sense of mattering, of moving, and being moved, of being one and indivisible with the great of the past, with all that freed, ennobled." In democracy's classrooms all matters are ennobled by gaining and sharing knowledge by and about its citizens.

Indeed, the stated purpose of the Women in Literature and Life Assembly addresses democracy, gender, and knowledge. The Assembly's purpose is "to focus attention on the status and image of women and girls, men and boys, in order to further the cause of equal treatment of women and girls in the context of English language arts education; to focus attention on gender-related issues in literacy teaching and learning; to advise the profession at large on issues relating to the roles and images of women; to act as a resource for NCTE and other groups; and to form liaisons with committees in other professional organizations." WILLA publishes a newsletter twice a year and this journal once a year to fulfill some of its purposes. In the works is an international conference on women in English and in Education cosponsored by WILLA. WILLA has published Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum for Grades 7 through 12 and is readying for press Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum: Pre-K to Grade 6.

WILLA is pleased to present the following: Dawn Haines' essay about how she sought and gained knowledge and encouragement from a writing group and her story that grew out of it; Lynn Butler-Kisber's essay on how groups worked together to improve the safety of women on campus; two essays on 19th century women--one by Deborah De Simone on Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a feminist as notable in her day as Gloria Steinem is in ours, and the other by Michelle Mock Murton on the imprisonment of women's bodies and minds in the 19th century; Linda Cullum on motives and methods in teaching Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing"; Jeanne Gerlach's review of Brooke Kroeger's *Nellie Bly* which details the courageous life of a world famous reporter who opened the doors of journalism for women; Rita Carey's poem "Premonition," and John Sutton's poem "Black Ice."

Section Editors

Early Childhood and Elementary

Vicki Silver Zack

I write in celebration of the completion of a final draft of the WILLA GUIDELINES FOR A GENDER-BALANCED CURRICULUM: PRE-K TO GRADE 6. We sent it off in May to the NCTE publications department in its entirety. We hope that we will have a printed brochure ready for the San Diego conference in November.

Our aim was to find books of quality which would touch hearts and stretch minds. As Driek Zirinsky noted in last year's column, few students (in her case, high school students) were selecting books of note because "these young readers didn't know about . . . authors they might select, and often their teachers didn't know which books to recommend to them." We hope that some of our booklist recommendations will fill a void for elementary school teachers and children. The members of the committee, Nancy Prosenjak, Linda Amspauch and I, compiled a beginning list, and then went far afield to seek reactions, and suggestions for additions and deletions.

It was difficult for us to draw the line and send the list to NCTE since there always seemed to be one more book just coming out which was a potentially valuable addition. For example, in April we heard about Jane Yolen's newly published *The Ballad of the Pirate Queens*, a riveting tale of two swashbuckling female pirates of the early 1700's. Another late entry was Karen Cushman's *Catherine, Called Birdy* set in the Middle Ages, which tells of one young woman's spirited efforts to resist her nobleman father's plans to marry her to the highest bidder. And as the list was due to be sent, we learned that one of the Canadian Children's Literature Roundtable Information Book Award finalists was *On the Shuttle: Eight Days in Space*, written about Canadian astronaut Roberta Bondar. Having brought one draft to completion, we look to the booklist stories, poems, and informational books to delight readers and give them a sense of their own strength and resourcefulness.

Secondary

Barbara A. Schaffner

Each school year brings both new experiences and old reminiscences as first year teachers, student teachers, and interns are added to the faculty. Everyone has a student-teaching story. We all faced our first class with the guidance of a helpful or not-so-helpful cooperating teacher. Some of us also have filled the role of college supervisor. I would like to focus on the role of the high school cooperating teacher and his/her role in helping new teachers to be aware of gender issues.

Obviously, the best place to learn to teach is the classroom. A knowledge of the subject matter and basic methods comes from the college courses. How to function successfully in the faculty room as well as the classroom is the area of the cooperating teacher. Ideally s/he will be able to guide and counsel the newcomers to our profession.

Gender issues in the classroom are of major concern. How a potential colleague treats other male and female members of the department and responds to them as persons, how s/he deals and copes with the relationship to male and female administrators can be made much easier with the guidance of a cooperating teacher.

Secondary schools are microcosms of the world. Gender issue problems of intimidation, sexual harassment, and inappropriate comments, unfortunately can confront the beginning teacher. A cooperating teacher can help the student teacher by pointing out potential problems and providing a forum for the discussion of issues. In addition s/he can help the new teacher to recognize gender problems among students. By helping a student teacher learn how to deal with both adult and student gender issues, a cooperating teacher can influence not only the present but the future.

College

Patricia P. Kelly

A few years ago when I was teaching in a large public high school, girls as well as female teachers were regularly touched and insulted in a hallway that was, of course, some distance from the office but was a main thoroughfare to classes. I complained to the principal, who laughed and told me to avoid the hallway. I talked with some of the girls in my classes; they told me that, although they didn't like it, there wasn't any way to stop it. That's just the way things are, they said. I was angry because even as an adult I felt cheapened and demeaned by these teenage boys' behavior and because, above all, no one would understand the seriousness of the situation.

Years have passed and schools have become even more hostile places for girls and at even younger ages. A recent Harris survey conducted for American Association of University Women defined sexual harassment as any "unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior which interferes with your life." That survey, published as "Hostile Hallways," reported that 76 percent of girls and 56 percent of boys said that they had been subjected to looks, comments, jokes, and/or gestures of a sexual nature. Sixty-five percent of girls and 42 percent of boys reported being touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way. Nineteen percent had been the target of graffiti on bathroom walls.

School hallways were the site of the sexual harassment for two of three students. More than half reported such incidents occurring in classrooms. Although 18 percent of the perpetrators of sexual harassment are school employees, 79 percent are other students. To make matters worse, fewer than one in ten students (7 percent) told a teacher; most tell no one. Even more distressing, 37 percent of the student perpetrators of sexual harassment say it's just a part of school life and that it's "no big deal."

See **COLLEGE**, *p. 28*

Retired

Bruce C. Appleby

Is there life after reitrement?

Yes.

Resoundingly, Yes.

When I decided to take early retirement in 1994, after 36 years of teaching at all grade levels from pre-school through graduate school, I had a couple of positive models to guide me. My father and my older brother both retired at 58, and their enjoyment of life after retirement led me to believe I, too, would enjoy it as much as they. My sister-in-law had also retired at around 58, and she was as supportive as my brother in my decision to take advantage of the "golden handshake" extended by the state of Illinois to those who had more than 30 years of experience, but who were under 60.

Now that I've been retired for just over a year, I find myself using the cliché: "I don't know how I had time to work." It's true. Just as we will fill a storage space to its capacity, we also will fill what we see as a storage space in personal time to capacity.

I'm finally finishing off my basement, a 21 year goal. As I write (late June of 1995), I'm finishing the process of relocating all my perennial flowers into a central location, so I have even more joy from the early daffodils and tulips and the current Asian lilies and day lilies. My picnic benches finally look as I want them to, the dock on my pond is surrounded by moss roses and vincas, and my chrysanthemums promise a brilliant fall.

Of even greater delight in retirement is the time to read what I want without thinking about the time I should/could be spending on grading student papers or preparing a lecture or reading Deborah Tannen's latest book. This is almost sinful delight. There is sheer luxury in discovering as you are totally involved in a mystery that it's 10:30

See **RETIRED**, *p. 27*

Psychological Safety of Women on Campus: A Collaborative Approach

by Lynn Butler-Kisber

Recently it has been acknowledged that women experience and evaluate their space differently from men and that ethnicity, race, class, age, ability and sexuality all have a direct bearing on how we experience our environments (METRAC, 1991). Women have begun to articulate the many dimensions of settings which merit scrutiny and change in order to avoid the considerable, and often unconscious, energy that is expended when our surroundings are physically and/or psychologically uncomfortable. Women's groups on campuses across the country are challenging institutions to study policies, practices, services, and physical designs which are prejudicial to women. This paper describes a two-year safety audit project at McGill University. Its success depended on a collaborative effort by students, staff, and administrators.

> A safety audit is a close evaluation of the physical environment for safety factors. It is an educational tool and an action plan. ... The audit looks at the environment—at how a space is put together and how it enhances or reinforces a sense of safety... The goal of safety audits is to improve the physical environment in ways that reduce the opportunities for sexual harassment or sexual assaults and to make the environment more comfortable and accessible to all ... The safety audit process validates women's experience of the environment by acknowledging that women are the experts of their experience.
>
> (Women's campus safety audit guide, METRAC/COU)

Included in this description are the nature of the process, the difficulties, the results to date, and some future directions which merit consideration.

The mini-audit

McGill University in Montreal is a large, decentralized institution in the heart of the city with approximately 21,000 full-time day students. An additional 10,000 evening students are part of the Centre for Continuing Education. Fifty-two percent of the 14,000 undergraduates are women.

In March 1992, the Advisory Committee on Women Students' Issues initiated and conducted a mini safety audit in and around several buildings on the McGill campus. The composition of the group included the students, professors, and staff on the Advisory Committee, the Dean of a large faculty, and the Director of Physical Resources as well as a representative from METRAC, Toronto (Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Women and Children). The impetus for the audit came from a tragic and violent shooting of 14 women at Ecole Polytechnique (a sister institution), a campus rape, and a general perception that assaults against women were increasing both in and around the University. The mini-audit was predicated on the notion that:

> ... every possible avenue must be examined in order to avoid all incidents involving safety on campus and... there is a responsibility to deal with the PERCEIVED physical and psychological safety needs of women in the McGill community.... to increase the comfort level of women, and consequently everyone, particularly after dark and during silent hours.
>
> (Butler-Kisber et al., 1992, p. 2).

The METRAC representative walked us through the process at early twilight and helped the group to "make the familiar strange" and to raise questions about the environment that had not consciously been addressed before. A summary of the exercise was submitted to the Advisory Committee by the METRAC representative and resulted in approval of a recommendation from the Dean of Students to do a campus-wide audit. The Dean of Students delegated the work to the Advisory Committee which formed a small subcommittee to complete the task.

Involving the University-at-large

The original involvement of the METRAC representative as an" outside expert," the Dean of Arts, and the Director of Physical Resources as well as approval from the Dean of Students gave a legitimacy to the pilot effort and subsequent campus-wide task. The next problem was how to retain ownership for the project in order to "research the work from below, rather than from above" as Dagg and Thompson (1988) would suggest and at the same time generate commitment for the exercise from the University as a whole.

> ***... there is a responsibility to deal with the PERCEIVED physical and psychological safety needs of women in the McGill community.... to increase the comfort level of women, and consequently everyone, particularly after dark and during silent hours.***

It was decided to approach the University through the Vice-Principal Academic Dean's Working Group. Since McGill is fairly decentralized where faculties and other such units enjoy relative autonomy, without a university-wide com-

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mitment of some sort, there was the danger that even if the audit were implemented the recommendations might never be realized.

The project was presented to this group as fundamental to the quality of all academic life. The deans were asked to support it by appointing a delegate who would then become part of an audit team that would survey the buildings and surrounding areas of the faculty or unit for which each dean had responsibility. In retrospect, the academic route carried momentum. The dean who had participated in the pilot study helped to garner support. The deans were reassured that their delegates would ensure a "faculty perspective" in the process. At the same time it was a way of keeping the Deans informed about and committed to the work. Similarly, the involvement of the Director of Physical Resources made it easier to get custodial staff participation (which had direct links to McGill security) and the funds to train the teams for the process. The students on the audit subcommittee were given the task of finding sufficient student volunteers to equip each of the subsequent 41 audit teams of 4, with 2 students, to ascertain gender balance and an equitable student-staff ratio. This responsibility also gave them the opportunity to recruit feminist participants.

Team formation and training

Lists of teams were drawn up and circulated to the Deans and their delegates, and then all participants attended a 2-hour training session given by Connie Guberman from METRAC who had already worked with other institutions on safety audits. Again, the external expert provided weight and legitimacy to the project. In addition to orienting the teams to the open-ended audit questionnaire and the fundamental ideas underlying the exercise, this forum helped to elicit and refute some of the sexist notions about women's safety that certain participants brought with them. One of the key shifts in thinking we were hoping to achieve was the understanding that issues on women's safety include psychological safety. We were trying to increase the understanding that women need to FEEL safe as well as be safe. Without this perception, low incident statistics are only partially indicative of campus safety. During the training sessions it was emphasized that the elaborated METRAC questionnaire that was to be used in the audit was structured to encourage the elicitation of feelings and perceptions as part of the data.

The audit process

At twilight on March 10, 1992, 41 teams met at their assigned buildings and for approximately 2 hours audited the interiors and immediate exterior surroundings of each. They were asked to keep copious notes using the audit questions as a guide and then to integrate their information and submit this to the subcommittee using two audit forms for an interior and exterior report. It took until June of the same year to receive all the reports. The open-ended nature of the survey, the large differences in audited areas and the composition of the teams produced interesting formats and variation. The rich and idiosyncratic qualitative data raised the usual issues that qualitative inquirers face: how to present the information and how to counteract questions concerning plausibility/validity.

The audit report

We grappled with how to retain the individual voices of the women which were so descriptively documented in the audits in order to persuade the quantitative scrutineers of the legitimacy of the process and results and to get the recommendations implemented. To do this, each audit was reduced to a one-page, individual summary of the area surveyed. These summary reports included location, descriptions, functions, hours, observations, and notations as well as the specific recommendations outlined in the report. All audit summaries were included in the appendix of the final report. The inclusion of these summaries in the report was perceived by a few University staff as overly negative. However, the response from most, in particular the women of the community, was extremely, positive. They were pleased that the nature and details of their concerns had not been glossed over by generalities.

Maria Portela, the research assistant who helped with the data analysis, was a graduate student studying architecture. Her expertise facilitated the task of compiling all the information about dark and isolated areas and then displaying this graphically on a map of the McGill campus. These data helped us to make the case for developing a "night route" and to obtain immediate resources to increase and concentrate safety and security measures along this route.

This Night Route Map (see page 7) outlines the optimal way of crossing the campus after dark and includes where the new phones are located and other pertinent information. Sightlines have been cleared, lighting has been enhanced, and security patrols this route more frequently. The map is currently distributed to all new students and as extensively as possible to all members of the university community.

The open-ended questions and recommendations were grouped into common categories, collapsed and expanded appropriately to encompass all the data, and ultimately classified into 14 dimensions. Summary tables of the indoor and outdoor audit recommendations were presented, indicating the frequency of the various recommendations classified by category and priority. The most important recommendations and comments were elaborated upon and interpreted further. Thirteen recommendations came out of the report. These included the need for improved signage and lighting, increased security, emergency communications and incident reporting, and a coordinating committee reporting to a vice- principal

to ensure the recommendations would be implemented and that audits would be done regularly.

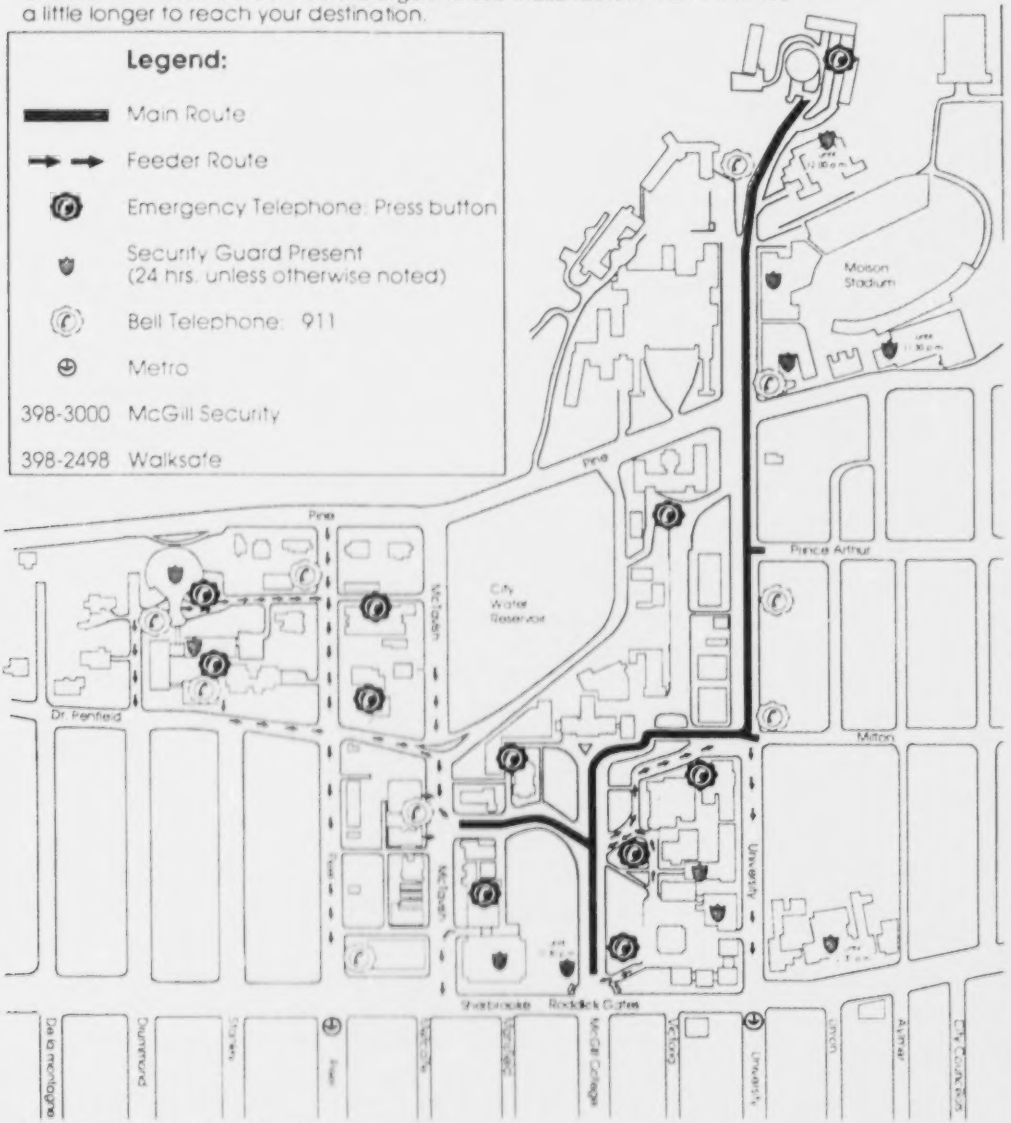
Releasing the report became a delicate balancing act. The members of the subcommittee responsible for the exercise all had to agree to the recommendations and sign off. Meanwhile, a tragic event at a sister university in which a professor shot four colleagues had suddenly put safety high on the University's agenda. The Administration began pressing for the report in mid-October 1992. Fortunately, a responsive vice-principal was persuaded that confidential access to a draft of the report could potentially undermine the whole process, and he rescinded his request. The report was finally released in early December. The report was released to the Administration, sent to participants, and made public simultaneously. The university-wide involvement, the methodology employed, and the distribution seemed to contribute to the generally favorable response. A strong letter of commendation to the subcommittee from the Principal of the University no doubt contributed to the momentum of the next stage in the process.

Implementation

In January 1993, a Committee on the Personal Safety of Women in the University was established, reporting to a senate committee chaired by a vice-principal. It began the task of implementing the recommendations. This work is still underway. To date, eight additional emergency phones of the most sophisticated type have been added to the campus. Lighting has been increased in some key areas, and mechanisms for reporting and replacing light outages and making requests for improving sightline obstructions have been put in place. A third patrol car has been added, and patrol frequency has been increased. A new software package that will interface incident location with the McGill security and Montreal police is being installed. The voluntary, student-run Walk-Safe Network has been given some financial support and the University has agreed to include the necessary expertise when adding or replacing signage. While the work is by no means over, perhaps most rewarding has been that, increasingly, upper level administrators and others are referring to women's psychological safety.

McGill **Night Route**

The map below outlines an East-West and North-South route for crossing the campus after dark. These routes have been chosen because they are less isolated, more open and better lit than others. You are urged to use these routes even if it takes a little longer to reach your destination.



McGill Student Services 1993 / 11

Implications

- The audit process is useful both for the concrete kinds of changes that can result from it and the consciousness-raising it provides. However, there is no doubt that the way the process is organized and implemented has a direct bearing on the degree of commitment and subsequent results. Attention to a process that engages and retains ownership for all constituents across an institution has a direct bearing on the momentum and realization of results.

- The notion of psychological safety should extend beyond the idea of perceived physical safety and include any context in which women in some sense do not feel safe or comfortable. The whole issue of sexual harassment is naturally a part of this. But it also includes contexts which have been referred to as hostile environments (Sandler & Paludi, 1993), places and situations in which women are hindered or expend unnecessary energy because the environment is either blatantly or subtly unsafe or uncomfortable. Encouraging women to log these situations and events as bases for discussion and action is both appropriate and necessary if changes are to be made.

- We need to develop ways to "audit" contexts from the "bottom up" and to extend these audits beyond the university and college level to the high schools and elementary schools. Only recently have educators begun to realize just how pertinent the notion of women's and girls' safety is to our schools and how perhaps inadvertently, but overly accepting, we have been about what constitutes admissible attitudes, behaviors, policies, and practices.

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An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1993 Fall Convention of the National Council of Teachers of English. Support for the project came from the Department of Physical Resources and the Office of the Dean of Students at McGill University.

Premonition

by Rita Carey

This wedge of dark and sometimes light
this being with no name, no body but mine
whose lips mumble through my bones and blood,
scaring me with secrets about tomorrow, tonight

All I know is a stirring
from shoulder to shoulder
rippling over the deep caverns of this body I call my home.
Stirring
before feta salads in the Greek bistro,
before a Saturday afternoon flight,
before we come together:
you, and you, and you
not just this time, but times before
with all of you.

It means the flesh receives the real air
that stratosphere where each one who knows/
something true
breathes out into the night sky, making the whole starlit/
world turn on its neon marquees
under my wrists and down my breasts.
Flashing out "wait,"
blinking out "stop,"
asking my attention.
It takes my breath to whisper-.
" something's coming."

On my way to the airport, I tell my friend:
"Something bad will happen on this trip.
God's made some plot to kill me."
A plane crash,
a reckless cabby in Reno,
a heart attack eight hundred miles from home
on the casino floor.

Something's coming.

I should know by now
it's never where I can touch
We have not kept in touch or spoken for weeks.
Too much coast to coast.
When we meet at five thousand feet, in Reno,/
we say we'll drive somewhere beautiful,
wind up the mountain to Tahoe.
Our bodies will wake us if we lead them
to speak on the mountain where this blue lake
lies down,
opens
undersky.
Our watery mother,
abundant,
stretching,

waiting to receive whatever is given.
Her lake spirit soft as the green goslings
webfooting her shore
where the road meets the sky.

My eyes should have seen it in the shadows the trees made
on snow drifts turned to ice
along the sunny shoulders of the road.

The soles of my feet should have felt it
on the sharp gravel beach.
Even though the lake water numbs my ankles,
later I can feel the burning for hours when I walk.

Two hours after you reel in your heart
from the bottom of the lake,
I should have said what I knew.
"You are fading. I can feel you fading across the lake
to another mountain."

By morning, in the emergency room,/
chills shake you so hard
the hospital gurney wobbles on its wheels.
A fever burns your face.
The way you can't sit up, or move
when the doctor unravels the stethoscope, says,/
"Let me listen."
I keep wondering if he will hear what I hear:
your heart still wriggling,
gnawing on the line
I cast out on the water
the evening before.

A pneumonia, he tells you.
If you'd waited, you might have died, he says.

The next night, late,
after two days like a charwoman at your bed,
I am looking through the casino for food/
the first time in a day.
Instead, standing among banks of slot machines,
I hear the smacking lips of that bodymouth
who told me something's coming.

I sit before a slick new machine
and in between the whirring and the ringing
the stitches around my heart come loose,
Stretched tendons snap back,
even the bonelinks break.
My knees sever in two.

seven seven seven

never in a row
little wins,
By a quarter to four in the morning,
as if I'd walked into the snow gone to ice
off the side of that road up to Tahoe,
I hypnotize myself into the night sky,
the burning stars like bright lanterns
over the hull that sinks forever into the North Atlantic.

In an interview with Eva Hart,
survivor of the Titanic,
Eva tells of her reasonable mother
whose only premonition came just before sailing.
Hysterical, now, Mrs. Hart said,
"Something dreadful's going to happen."

Below the waterline
on the starboard hull
the ice grazed the ship and gave Eva, the child/
sleeping in her stateroom bed,
"a slight vibration, a slight bump
like a train pulling into a station."

Forty-one degrees north, fifty degrees west
lifeboats held space for only half
the twenty-two hundred on board.
Seven hundred five survived.
After bundling his child and his wife into one of them,
Mr. Hart fell down two miles with the ship.

Eva remembers, "The most dreadful sound of all
is the sound of people drowning.
The screams.
I never closed my eyes."

"I owe my life to that premonition.
My mother, you see, sat up at night and/
slept during the day."

Years later, speaking of her premonition,
Mrs. Hart told her daughter,
"This dreadful something
I had to live with..."

What I heard on that drive to the airport,
in the gravel along the lake, that fading of yours/
to a reef on the other side
of the Sierra Nevadas:

> I see shadows on the snow only when
> tree branches wave across the lake
> to another mountain.

The wireless operator
sending Marconigrams
in time.

RITA CAREY, Ph.D., a poet and fiction writer, lives in Portland, Oregon. She is tenured at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, where she teaches literature, composition and fiction writing and serves as English advisor on the student literary and graphic arts magazine, Phoenix.

Lost and Found in Space:
Using Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing" to Encourage Resistance and Identification in the Introductory Literature Classroom

by Linda Cullum

"Dead, but still with us, still with us, but dead."
The Dead Father
by Donald Barthelme

The opening words of Barthelme's *The Dead Father* describe the great paternal figure of Modernism as he is dragged to his grave. They describe also the apprehensive and passive attitudes that students, weighed down by a conventional pedagogy that has denied them access to their own unique and valid responses to literature and the world around them, drag into introductory literature classrooms. In this essay, I discuss my efforts to invigorate my introductory literature students and to draw them into a more active relationship with texts and with one another by using the feminist teaching and learning strategies of resistance and identification. Specifically, I focus on the methods and results of one such activity in which students read Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing" resistively, in search of what seems missing from the story, and then participated in the construction of new meaning by contributing their own "additions" to the text.

My challenge in my introductory literature classes is to counter years of exposure to the conventional pedagogy that privileges the authority of the text and teacher by creating a classroom environment in which the text is only one among many potential sites of meaning and my voice as teacher is softened so that it is only one possible response. I do this to encourage students to shift their own reading stance from that of passive acceptance to active production of meaning and to respect both their own constructions and those of the other class members.

To do so, I draw upon the interdependent concepts of what feminist teachers often refer to as resistance and identification. Simply put, students are invited to resist the rigid attitudes that so many have brought to class with them--attitudes that often manifest themselves in a belief in a dominant, patriarchal, perspective that precludes other viewpoints and other voices. I encourage students to replace this monologic position with an appreciation of the validity of individual response—not just their own responses, which is always a temptation, but the inevitably unique interpretations of other class members.

I often facilitate this new appreciation through the process of encouraging students to identify both with the other perspectives found in the texts and the other voices heard in the classroom. As Dale Bauer expresses it, "feminist—or identificatory—rhetoric is [a strategy] by which we teach students "how to belong, how to identify, as well as how to resist" (390). Such identification enables class members to begin to understand the variability and ambiguity of individual response. Students learn to trust themselves to think creatively and to trust one another, to be receptive to one another's rich and varied surfaces, as they come, as Carolyn Shrewsbury has observed, "to respect each other's differences rather than fear them" (6).

Simply to propound these new goals serves only to replace one externally validated structure with another, albeit more *au courant*, one. Instead, early in the semester, I actively involve students in the interpretative process. For example, in reading and discussing a short story, I encourage students to think of any problem areas as kinds of "white spaces" in which their own imaginations can engage with the text in the construction of meaning.

Last semester, Tillie Olsen's "I Stand Here Ironing" was the subject of this pedagogical approach. In this story, a phone call from a social worker expressing concern for Emily prompts the mother/narrator to embark on an interior monologue in which she reviews, often with stark honesty and harsh judgments, her life with her 19 year old daughter. The mother/narrator seeks, through language and memory, to "construct" her past, to make meaning from and come to terms with her life in an effort to "total it all" (12), and to gain a better understanding of her own actions and their effects on Emily.

We began our exploration of "I Stand Here Ironing" with an extensive classroom conversation in which we considered, for example, what keeps the mother passive and what her options might have been as a young, single mother in the 1930's. We also discussed Emily's future and the role that her gift for comedy-- her one empowering and creative "ability,—might play. Little conversation centered on either of the mother's two husbands—the first, because he abandoned the family when Emily was only eight months old; the second, because he is mentioned only fleetingly as a non-presence to whom she writes 'IV-mail.'"

As "resisting readers" and as a community of interpreters, the students turned their attention to the gaps in this story in an effort to identify what they considered to be the most problematic missing piece. In class discussions together and in their response journals alone, students wondered what, in this candid revelation of weakness and loss, has not been so frank? Why is the mother taking such care to scrutinize her behavior and motives? What responsibility is being taken?

What is not acknowledged? Almost as one, students agreed that, for them, the most problematical spot was the one in which, in the context of wondering about the source of Emily's humor, the mother casually mentions that she has remarried while Emily was away from home:

> Where does it come from, that comedy? There was none of it in her when she came back to me that second time, after I had had to send her away again. She had a new daddy now to learn to love, and I think perhaps it was a better time (4).

By reading the story against the grain in this way, in search of the inevitable space or spaces where information has been omitted or suppressed, students resist the authority of the narrator of the text. In doing so, they learn to suspect the voice of any authority figure and to develop an ability to question and judge and thereby participate in critical and creative thought.

Resistance to authority is a necessary first step; however, it is, as Teresa de Laurentis has noted, "power, not resistance or negativity, that is the positive condition of knowledge" (qtd in Murphy 174). From this collaborative resistance, students go on to write outside papers in which they formulate and articulate their own creative responses, locating the power within themselves to participate in the construction of meaning. In these papers, which reflect each student's unique understanding of the characters and the story as a whole, students venture into the problematized space to construct their own personal "envisionments"—as Judith Langer calls any interaction between reader and text (39)—of what might have happened while Emily was away that led to her getting a "new daddy."

Sometimes, as can be imagined, students respond to this request for an "envisionment" with a return to resistance, for they are reluctant to attempt such "tampering." As one student phrased it in her response journal, "I don't like to 'mess' with Olsen's words, as if I don't appreciate her." But it is precisely this intrusion—this move from what is "in" the text to what is glaringly absent—that allows students to appreciate their own imaginative power, an appreciation that, for many, has long since been invalidated by an educational system that does not encourage questions and evaluation. One male student, sensing the legitimacy of interpretations apart from the teacher's or the professional critic's, described his previous frustration in this way: "In high school, if you said what you thought the poem or story meant, my teacher would tell you 'no' and then tell you what he thought, which, of course, was the correct meaning."

Encouraging students to create their own meanings by exploring the "white space" in a text is personally empowering, thus fulfilling a primary goal in my classroom. But equally beneficial is the way in which this particular creative act demands an identification with The Other, in the form of the characters' perspectives, leading to an awareness of, and respect for, new voices and different viewpoints. Indeed, Olsen's story about two complex women—each oppressed and needy yet resilient in her own way—provides an excellent opportunity for students to explore and articulate their identification with a female consciousness. It is an identification I would contend that most students, regardless of whether they see themselves as having "majority" or "minority" status in the larger culture, have already—quite unknowingly—begun when they stepped into the literature classroom. For, in this context at least, they are the voiceless, the submissive victims of the "word" as formulated for them in the text and interpreted by the teacher. Already intimidated, cowed by their awe of the printed material, and fearful that they will never get "it,"—whatever that mysterious and elusive "it" is—they are already well-positioned to do what Nina Auerbach describes as learning to "read...with all the skeptical purity of an outcast from culture" (156).

And, indeed, the envisionments that resulted from students' considering the circumstances of the mother/narrator's second marriage show that the majority of them, regardless of gender or ethnicity, do clearly identify with one of these "outcasts." When reviewing the results of the 45 essays of one section of my introductory literature class, I was surprised to note just how few writers invested much identificatory energy in the second husband; even though conjecturing about his and the mother's courtship would have provided ample opportunity to do so, only a handful of students, primarily males, focused their attention almost exclusively on the new husband.

> ***... not just their own responses, which is always a temptation, but the inevitably unique interpretations of other class members. ...I often facilitate this new appreciation through the process of encouraging students to identify both with the other perspectives found in the texts and the other voices heard in the classroom.***

Most others described him more in passing, as he relates to the mother or Emily. In these envisionments, he is, interestingly enough, often portrayed as a rather feminized representative of the patriarchy—kind, gentle, and supportive (one wish-fulfilling student even created him as a teacher who "makes the rules, but is fair at all times"). And although he generally holds a position of power (e.g., the night manager in the diner where the mother works; foreman in her factory; policeman; bank teller; military man; even a fellow worker who drives her home), he is attenuated by descrip-

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tions that make him "shy and vulnerable like my Emily"; a mirror-image of the mother ("both of us knew we wouldn't be able to make it on our own... we were best friends"); or inconsequential ("he works all the time, and falls asleep after reading the paper").

However, the real focus of student identification was on one or both of the women. While in previous discussion many class members were highly critical of the mother for her passivity and weakness—and even of Emily for not managing to rise above her oppressed upbringing more thoroughly—very little of that criticism is in evidence in these new envisionments. Instead, students were willing to acknowledge rather than condemn the condition of those in the margins of a majority-minded world. A quotation from a male student sums up this appreciation: "we [Emily and her mother] were puppets in a show controlled by someone else with wire and strings."

Not surprisingly, in the identifactory process, male class members were more inclined to forgive the mother for her erratic treatment of her firstborn and pictured a happy, stable future for her, while the females focused more relentlessly on Mother's shame and guilt for being too self-absorbed ("she looked at me with those lost eyes, but I guess I didn't care enough to notice"; "I will never forgive myself") or not self-reliant enough ("I was convinced by my husband... I should have trusted my instincts about a lot more things").

Clearly, this project enabled most students to achieve some degree of identification with a feminine consciousness, an accomplishment that is captured nicely in this male student's journal entry (note the telling pronoun shift):

> I feel more sympathy for the mother now. Before, I felt that she did not do enough for Emily.... I now see that the mother was making an honest, hard effort to do her best. We all do things that we regret; it's how we choose to learn from our experiences that makes us unique.

In addition to strong identifications, I can also see in these envisionments a burgeoning awareness of the difficulties inherent in making and negotiating meaning, as well as a willingness to confront the condition of the other—two necessary conditions for positive change in the classroom. Aside from a very few students who staunchly resisted any ambiguity in the story or in their reactions to it, picturing, in the words of one female, "a romance straight from the fairy tales," —most writers were more than willing to confront the uncertainty and ambiguity of this "dark and confusing time." This awareness is often reflected in the puzzled and querulous tone of many of the stories (In reference to her new step-father, one "Emily" asks, "who the heck is this guy... how does anyone 'learn to love?").

The writers grapple with their sense of life's ambiguities in various ways—with one student even composing three different possible scenarios. Some were not entirely comfortable with this awareness of uncertainty and created stories that could only hint at some trouble under the surface, where, for reasons the writer can't quite fathom, things just don't "work out." This sense of the problematical causes one male writer, in the voice of the mother, to express envy of "a man's life, his security, and the simplicity of it."

Other scenarios headed in the direction of the mother's hope for a "better time," but then take a sharp turn. Over and over, the mother's expectations of harmony for the new triad are disrupted, and she must cope with either her new husband or, more commonly, Emily ("unwanted and alone") being shoved outside the family circle: in either event, someone assumes the position of Other.

A large number of writers displayed their "skeptical purity" and their awareness of ambiguity by choosing to suspect the mother's motives for remarriage. Financial need is the primary factor, with the mother making observations such as "I knew I needed someone, not necessarily him, but someone" and "love was not a priority, security was." This scenario may show a desire to empower the mother in some way, since she is doing something to help herself—to secure her future—using the only means available to her.

Through these envisionments surface the beginnings of resistance and identification that will lead to the production of deeper understandings in the classroom: of texts, of themselves, and of one another. Students are also getting a necessary taste of what it means to grasp ambiguity—to see that, as one student phrased it, "joy [can be] mixed with pain, surprise, sadness". Most importantly, student confidence is being engendered, for even the most silenced student gets a chance to, as one of my female students commented, experience a new-found sense of power, to "be the puppet master and pull the strings of these interesting characters."

These new experiences and voices are brought together when students share with pride their highly varied and imaginative interpretations. Each unique sensibility is validated as students demonstrate to themselves and one another what Norman Holland has termed "the mysterious openness and receptivity of literature" (118), which paves the road for many rich, varied, and exciting conversations in the semester to come.

"I Stand Here Ironing" concludes with the mother's final prayer for her daughter to "know that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron" (12). Ironically, this story, so centered on empowerment issues, enables students to sense their own power as writers and thinkers. Using co-creative strategies such as this can help introductory literature students to feel a little less helpless before

See **LOST**, *p. 27*

Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the Feminization of Education

by Deborah M. De Simone

Within the last decade or so, Charlotte Perkins Gilman has been experiencing something of a renaissance. While this prominent turn-of-the-century intellectual leader languished in obscurity until Carl Degler resurrected her in the mid-1950s, today there are two biographies, two collections of her writings, numerous literary criticisms; and "The Yellow Wallpaper' proclaims her "feminist manifesto," not only in print but as adapted for Masterpiece Theater, the opera, and the ballet.[1] Why all the renewed interest in Gilman? According to Mary Hill and Ann Lane, the answers lie in the life experiences of a rather extraordinary woman who waged a lifelong battle against the restrictive patriarchal social codes for women in late nineteenth-century America. From this battle, Gilman developed a controversial conception of womanhood.

Born in 1860, Gilman, a self-educated intellectual, dedicated her life to serving humanity. When her lover unexpectedly proposed, she was suddenly torn between work and marriage. After years of debating whether to marry or not to marry, she consented and to the best of her abilities assumed the traditional roles of wife and mother, only to suffer a debilitating nervous breakdown. When her treatment of total rest drove her close to insanity, she was cured by removing herself physically from her home, husband, and finally her child, and by engaging in and writing about the social movements of the day.

Using her extraordinary life experiences as a female within a patriarchal system, Gilman redefined womanhood, declaring women the equal of men in all spheres of life. This "new woman" was to be an intelligent, well-informed, and well-educated free thinker, the creator and expresser of her own ideas. She was to be economically self-sufficient, socially independent, and politically active. She would share the opportunities, duties, and responsibilities of the workplace with men, and together they would share the solitude of the hearth. Finally, the new woman was to be as informed, assertive, confident, and influential as she was compassionate, nurturing, loving, sensitive — a woman of the world as well as of the home. Gilman's vision of an autonomous female challenged not only the traditional "cult of true womanhood" but the concepts and values of family, home, religion, community, capitalism, and democracy.[2]

Gilman's writings about these tensions and struggles between marriage and career, social expectations and personal goals continue to impact women's decisions today, while illuminating her arguments for abating them has greatly heightened our understanding of the power of social norms on the individual.

Moreover, Gilman's writings about these tensions and struggles between marriage and career, social expectations, and personal goals continue to impact women's decisions today, while illuminating her arguments for abating them has greatly heightened our understanding of the power of social norms on the individual. More importantly, Gilman's life and works provided us a role model.

Unfortunately, this focus on Gilman's life experiences has lead scholars to view Gilman first and foremost as a feminist and her place within women's history. However, Gilman's feminist ideas clearly have a place within educational history and the long tradition of female authors who wrote in order to transform society by educating other women. Like her great aunt Catharine Beecher, Gilman illustrated the need to systematize instruction in the domestic realm and to develop institutions for teacher education. Like M. Carey Thomas, she emphasized the need to offer an intellectually challenging higher education for women that was on par with the collegiate liberal arts education, one that would train women in critical and analytical thought. Like Jane Adams, she viewed education as integral to democracy, and she wanted children's schooling to promote unity by teaching them to direct and adjust their own actions to those of others.

Only Jane Roland Martin in *Reclaiming a Conversation* has explored Gilman's ideas on education.[3] Yet Martin placed Gilman within the historical and philosophical discussion regarding the ideal of an educated woman. Neither Gilman's critique of the educational system at the turn of the century nor her ideas on early childhood education were considered fully. Further, her ideas on citizenship education were explored only within the context of motherhood and a female utopia. Thus, Gilman has not been viewed within the context of progressive education, early childhood education, or citizenship education. Moreover, the centrality of education within Gilman's feminist philosophy has been lessened. Like John Dewey, Gilman sought through education to create a more democratic society. Yet Gilman's conception of education and vision of democracy were more radical than his. In reaction to the patriarchal nature of society, Gilman envisioned a feminized educational system and a feminized society. By feminizing the values, attitudes, and sensibilities of education, as well as the content, methodology, and

philosophy, Gilman hoped to end gender discrepancies within society by creating a fundamentally new woman.

Gilman shared many basic educational ideas with the generation of thinkers who matured during the period of "intellectual chaos" caused by Darwin's *Origin of the Species*.[4] Marked by the belief that individuals can direct human and social evolution, many progressives came to view education as the panacea for advancing social progress and for solving such problems as urbanization, poverty, or immigration. The feminized educational system that Gilman devised was based on this belief in the powers of education and her knowledge of the educational experiments undertaken at Hull House in the 1890's. She spent three months at Hull House during the period when John Dewey was active there, and Dewey's influence on Jane Adams and hers on him, are well documented.[5] No clear evidence indicates that Gilman read or corresponded with John Dewey, although she often recast others' ideas, blending them with her own, without acknowledging the originator. Whether the result of observation, reading, or conversation, the similarities between these three educational theorists are marked. All emphasized the importance of environment in education, all sought to connect learning to the experience of the child and to the needs of society, all recognized the direct relationship between education and democracy, and all advocated learning by doing. Yet only Gilman discussed education in terms of gender discrepancy and the impact of education (or the lack of education) on women.

Gilman had begun to explore the issue of gender discrepancy within society in the mid-1880s when she first began her career as a writer. Her first published essays focused on the inequity found within marriage and child-rearing. Her collection of poetry, *In This Our World*, furthered her reputation as a writer about women's condition as her poems criticized suffocating love and the association of women with sin. Gilman emerged as an acknowledged force on the literary scene with her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper." Her gripping tale of a new mother's descent into madness brought to light the inequity between men and women within the family and the overwhelming nature of Victorian social norms for womanhood. Not until the publication of *Women and Economics*, however, did Gilman systematically analyze issues of gender discrepancy or the relationship between education and women. Arguing from the vantage-point of evolutionary science, Gilman illustrated how humans "are the only animal species in which the female depends upon the male for food, the only animal in which the sex-relation is also an economic relation."[6] Women's economic dependence resulted in their being "denied the enlarged activities which have developed intelligence in man, denied the education of the will which only comes by freedom and power."[7] The liberation of women thus required education and the opportunity to use the fruits of their studies to establish social as well as economic independence.

After the success of *Women and Economics*, the issue of female education became a familiar theme in Gilman's works. A prolific writer, she published one collection of poetry, seven theoretical treatises, countless essays for popular and scholarly journals, and her own journal called the *Forerunner*, which she alone wrote for seven years and in which she serialized four full-length novels. Gilman's work constantly explored the role of women in society, questions of what knowledge was of most worth to women, ways women might use that knowledge to improve society. Though she had a mixed audience in both Europe and the United States, Gilman directed her message to those women whom she felt were not engaged in the larger movements of the time and therefore needed to expand their sphere outside the home.

While much of her work dealt with education implicitly, a great deal of the discussions were explicit. In an article she wrote for the Independent titled "Child Labor and the Schools," Gilman painted a broad view of education, defining its "real interest" as "the free exercise of natural faculties, the pursuit of knowledge for the love of it, the reverence for the truth, the delight in feats of mental skill, and in all daily wonders of an unfolding world of fact and law."[8] In the *Forerunner* she said the goal of education was to teach individuals to "see clearly, to understand, to properly relate one idea to another, to refuse superstition and mere repetition of other people's opinion."[9]

Throughout all her works on women and education, Gilman's ultimate goal was to develop autonomous individuals, for rational behavior was possible only if self-governing men and women could connect knowledge with action and could judge others' opinions in relation to their own. Autonomy depended on the development of two powers, "a clear, far-reaching judgment, and a strong, well used will."[10] Judgment and will were the crucial ingredients of citizenship in fostering respect for others, in developing critical thinking skills, and in guarding against "the habit of acting without understanding, and also of understanding without acting."[11] For Gilman, criticism was based in experience and imagination; for how could we criticize something without some knowledge of it or without some vision of what it might be? Therefore, education must emphasize imagination as well as truth and reason, self-discipline as well as self-restraint. Moreover, education must combine all these skills to develop the faculties of reason so essential to rational and judicious-acting individuals and so crucial to avoid "that fatal facility in following other people's judgment and other people's will which tends to make us a helpless mob, mere sheep, instead of wise free, strong individuals."[12]

Gilman's most explicit discussions of education and its

impact on women were presented in *The Man-Made World, Herland, and Concerning Children.* In *The Man-Made World,* Gilman analyzed the androcentric nature of society and strove to "point out what are masculine traits as distinct from human ones, and what has been the effect on our human life of the unbridled dominance of one sex."[13] While the book explored gender discrepancy within such areas as literature, law, history, sports, and religion, a great deal of attention was paid to the realm of education. Believing that the "origin of education is maternal," Gilman criticized the degree of competition in the schools which perpetuated the patriarchal culture, one based on the "male characteristics" of desire and combat.[14] "Desire, the base of the reward system, the incentive of self-interest" led to an unwillingness to learn when pleasure was not guaranteed, while "Combat, the competitive system' emphasized winning rather than the pleasure of learning or the exercising of the mind.[15] The real problem, for Gilman, was that self-interest and competition did not develop the "human qualities" within men and women that enable society to "learn from wide and long experience to anticipate and provide for the steps of the unfolding mind, and train it through carefully prearranged experiences, to a power of judgment, of self-control, or social perception."[16]

In recognizing that the educational philosophy at the turn of the century was both determined by the androcentric nature of society and affected by the cult of domesticity, Gilman argued that female instruction was masculine in its content and philosophy as well as in its methods and pedagogy.

In recognizing that the educational philosophy at the turn of the century was both determined by the androcentric nature of society and affected by the cult of domesticity, Gilman argued that female instruction was masculine in its content and philosophy as well as in its methods and pedagogy. Building upon the earlier efforts of Francis Wright and Catharine Beecher towards establishing alternative philosophies of instruction, Gilman maintained that the predominant educational philosophy was still too narrow since masculine traits were defined as human traits and female traits were defined as other.[17] Thus, women's emergence into primary, secondary, and higher education was but further immersion into institutions marked by the male characteristics of competition, self-interest, and self-expression. In both *The Man-Made World* and *His Religion and Hers.* She argued that this imbalance in the nature of women's education resonated in the types of knowledge extended to women: the knowledge considered of most worth to women was the knowledge determined, accumulated, and organized by men; it was masculine knowledge presented within a masculine culture in a masculine way.[18]

In *Herland,* her all female utopian novel, Gilman suggested how society and education might be different if motherhood rather than manliness became the cultural ideal. In a land where neither the private home nor the nuclear family existed, the characteristics of love, service, ingenuity, and efficiency became the dominant social norms and motherhood became a social rather than biological category. "Here we have Human Motherhood — in full working use," explained a Herlander to a male intruder in her country. "The children in this country are the one center and focus of all our thoughts. Every step of our advance is always considered in its effect on them — on the race. You see, we are Mothers."[19] Therefore, education became the "highest art, allowed only to our highest artists" and childrearing emerged as "a culture so profoundly studied, practiced with such subtlety and skill, that the more we love our children the less we are willing to trust that process to unskilled hands — even our own."[20] As Jane Roland Martin so aptly noted, in *Herland* "the interests of women, children, and the state become one, so that an education for citizenship is an education for motherhood, just as an education for motherhood is an education for citizenship."[21]

In comparing education for citizenship with education for motherhood, Gilman stressed social responsibility as central to education. Moreover, she illuminated the imbalanced nature of the androcentric society and its disregard for the qualities of womanhood evident in citizenship. Accordingly, the existing male-dominated culture needed to be feminized; it needed to reevaluate social values and attitudes towards women and women's role within the economy and society at large. Education, for Gilman, was the most effective way to transform society, so the most effective way to feminize society was to feminize education.

> To feminize education would be to make it motherly. The mother does not rear her children by a system of prizes to be longed for and pursued; nor does she set them to compete with one another, giving to the conquering child what he needs, and to the vanquished, blame and deprivation.... Motherhood does all it knows to give each child what is most needed, to affectionately and efficiently develop the whole of them.[22]

The emphasis on social responsibility, specialized knowledge, and common characteristics in education created a system in which women could develop to their full potentials. In teaching women to dedicate their lives to the common good rather than the familial good, education liberated women from the "chamber and scullery work" of the home and helped them to recognize their connection, commitment, and contribution to the larger world. The emphasis on social responsibility

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enabled women to participate in "human work' and to become active members of the economy. In devising an educational system that de-emphasized masculine and feminine character traits, Gilman enabled women to enter and to act as full and equal members of society. Trained in similar manners, exposed to the same types of knowledge, encouraged towards parallel goals, women, in Gilman's educational philosophy, would be empowered to assume a myriad of new roles and to enter into various types of relationships with men. Through a gender-balanced education, women and men would develop into socially active, intellectually stimulating, financially self-reliant, civically responsible, personally courageous human beings.

Based on her knowledge of the kindergarten movement, the experimental education she observed at Hull House, and her belief that child care must be available if women are to enter the work force, Gilman adapted the educational ideas of Froebel to meet the needs of the very young. "Civilized society," Gilman wrote in *Concerning Children* , "is responsible for civilized childhood, and should meet its responsibilities" by attending to the needs of all its young.[23] As depicted in *Herland* , infant education became a social responsibility, not the responsibility of the biological parents. In arguing for the extension of responsibility to all children through a collectivist approach to early childhood education, Gilman noted the frustration of many women with the inability to properly care for their children. It was absurd to assume that each mother, educated for neither marriage, social service, nor motherhood, was a natural-born teacher of children. "You cannot expect every mother to be a good school educator or a good college educator. Why," she asked, "should you expect every mother to be a good nursery educator?"[24]

Infant education, in Gilman's view, "should be, as far as possible, unconscious." Such an education would commence in babyhood and involve a "beautiful and delicately adjusted environment...in which line and color and sound and touch are all made avenues of easy unconscious learning [so that] there is no sharp break between 'home' and 'school.'"[25] Babygardens and the method of unconscious education would provide major intellectual and social benefits, for they supplied "the world with young citizens of unimpaired mental vigor, original powers and tastes, and strong special interest" who learned from infancy "to say 'we' instead of 'I.'"[26] Finally, Gilman firmly believed that infant education should be as scientific and specialized as all other levels of education and that the instructors should be as well trained and professional as all other teachers.

Perceiving the roots of education as maternal, Gilman thought women were best fitted for child care. Herein lay a fundamental paradox between her recognition of the symbiotic relations between women and children — that any changes in the status of women affected children — and her struggle to open the parameters of professional opportunities to women. By arguing that feminizing education would make it "motherly" and that the nature of education was "maternal," Gilman offered a theory that failed to break with the Victorian emphasis on the unique qualities of womanhood. Ironically, her call for infant education was, in many ways, a call for the professionalization of motherhood that channeled women into areas, albeit professionalized, traditionally within women's sphere of influence. Further, in addressing her comments and concerns mostly to problems of the middling and upper classes, Gilman excluded large numbers of women and men of various economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds from her social vision, never suggesting their role in this new, gender-balanced society.

Throughout her long and distinguished career as a feminist writer and lecturer, Gilman was never comfortable with labels. "I was not a reformer but a philosopher," she wrote in her autobiography. "I worked for various reforms, as Socrates went to war when Athens needed his services, but we do not remember him as a soldier. My business was to find out what ailed society, and how most easily and naturally to improve it."[27] The way she found "most easily and naturally" to improve society was through education. "I am a teacher," she declared in a statement rarely noted by scholars.[28] Gilman used her lectures and publications deliberately to teach present and future generations about the possibilities that lay open to them. Her educational efforts were twofold: she wrote about education, and she wrote to educate. All of her works focused on women; some of them commented on schooling, but almost all included her critique of the informal education women received within the home and the community. Though written a century ago, Gilman's critique of womanhood and education remains potent as society continues to struggle with issues of gender and women continue to struggle for equality, independence, and autonomy.

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11 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Concerning Children* (Boston: Small Maynard, 1900), 51-52.

12 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 39.

13 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World: Our Androcentric Culture* (New York: Charlton, 1911), 19.

14 ibid, 143.

15 ibid, 151. It was not that Gilman saw these traits — desire and combat — as completely distasteful qualities, divorced from the development of individuality and intellect: on the contrary, Gilman saw these traits as valuable and constructive when balanced with the "female" traits of nurture and cooperation. See page 20.

16 ibid, 162.

17 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World*, 146.

18 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World*, 17; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *His Religion and Hers: A Study of the Faith of Our Fathers and the Work of Our Mothers* (New York: The Century Co., 1923), 57-78.

19 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*, 66.

20 ibid, 82 and 83.

21 Jane Roland Martin, *Reclaiming a Conversation*, 151.

22 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Man-Made World*, 152.

23 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 294-295.

24 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics*, 284.

25 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Concerning Children*, 144.

26 ibid, 153 and 132.

27 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975: 1st pub., 1935), 182.

28 ibid, 311.

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Black Ice

by John Sutton

The stunning beauty
Like her Mother's
That she always made a point to renounce
Requires less renunciation
Now that it begins to fade--
And that disturbs her.
And the fact that it disturbs her
Disturbs her even more.
Occasions for her stock tirade
On the inconsequence
Of physical beauty
Are fewer now.
Once irrelevant and unvalued
Sheer beauty now becomes
A delicate sticking point.

She searches for a new music:
Her Father's song
Will not suffice
Without her Father's voice
To sing it and impose its truth.
The song alone
No longer soothes.
It was the voice,
Not just the song.

Behind the wheel
She guides the Sunbird
Through the autumn night.
Her Daughter fiddles with the radio,
Searching--
Up and down the scale--
All talk, no music.
The slender, young hand
Clicks the plastic knob.

She brakes hard at a shadow,
Shivers, then breathes.
"Black ice," she says
To youth's wide eyes.
And then, for the first time
Weaved from her waking dreams
She sings
    a new song
        for a beautiful daughter.

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Writing with a Gun to My Head: Reflections on a Writers' Group, Teaching Writing, and the Creative Process

by Dawn Haines

At the end of Flannery O'Connor's short story, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," the Misfit holds a gun to the grandmother's head. She frightens him by saying, "Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children!" She desperately tries to save herself by saying what she must believe the Misfit wants or needs to hear; she tries to manipulate his sympathies, to appeal to what she believes is his good character, his sensibilities, his moral fiber. Her survival depends on it. When he shoots her, Bobby Lee asks, "She was a talker, wasn't she?" The Misfit retorts, "She would of been a good woman if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life."

I teach this story every year. My students like it. I'm always interested to hear them interpret that statement. They see the gun as a controlling device. They believe the gun keeps the grandmother in line and makes her nicer than she really is. They think the gun brings out the best in people. Some say the gun simply kills.

My writing group is a gun.

I have a hard time writing. Alone, in my house where suddenly I need to clean my desk, pay bills, return phone calls, write lesson plans, I have a hard time sitting in the moment and writing. I can go weeks without putting pen to paper, but I write in my writers' group.

Two years ago, I embraced a period of jobless, empty time and started to write. I took my share of creative writing courses, spent hours staring at the blank screen, kept notebooks by my bed for capturing dreams and fragments as they floated above me at night. And I joined eight other women writers/teachers who were writing creatively together and reading their stories aloud. Friday nights came, and at times when I was not writing a lot, when I felt unmotivated or frustrated, sitting among my peers was like staring at that gun before me. And I wrote. Often the group got the best out of me. Over time, I learned to decide to overcome my writing obstacles, and the gun's power turned on itself. What I was learning through the act of writing in this group opened doors to my creative process and showed me how to become a writer. The process affected, and continues to impact, all of the creative areas in my life, including my teaching.

Writing is a solitary act, and often a difficult one, and for all of us, I suspect, putting the pen down, turning away from the computer stops the pain only temporarily. But in a group of writers all writing together, it becomes a supported and collective act. For decades, we teachers have been encouraging writing circles in our classrooms where students experience the challenges, frustrations and joys of writing in a group, collectively, with support and good attention. Yet, when we write our own poetry, novels, and stories, we take to a private room and face the demons and white spaces alone. A part of writing is the process of starting. To simply get at the work and then to stick to it. Teaching writing as a shared experience is one way to invite writing process to happen. It is a way to start.

In the beginning, this group, this gun to my head, this planned time to write, got me writing and in a new way I hadn't previously tried. Once I got going, I began to understand how to take the writing experience I was having in the group into my own writing time, how to use the arbitrary prompts as tools for finding my voice, my characters, my story. I was shaping a writing practice. As a new writer in creative writing courses, I was just beginning to take a leap from journaling to writing fiction. I found the focus in those courses to be limited to technical critique. We didn't discuss the writing process and the writing life; the emphasis was more on product than process. We didn't write together; writing creatively wasn't modeled. I pushed my stories into molds, someone else's way of writing a story based on outside opinions, and these first stories were not strong enough to hold the weight of all the technical pieces my professors told me I must incorporate. I didn't understand that in order to learn how to write, I needed to write, a lot. Just write, freely and unabashedly. I was spending too much energy in the wrong kind of process. I was evaluating my abilities and my stories before I understood what they were, what I was trying to do in them. They were only beginnings. To change them and revise them before they were finished simply moved me out of my own writing experience and into another. I needed to spend time in my writing experience in order to learn how to become a writer.

Writing is a solitary act, and often a difficult one, and for all of us, I suspect, putting the pen down, turning away from the computer stops the pain only temporarily. But in a group of writers all writing together, it becomes a supported and collective act.

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The group provides me with one avenue for experiencing my writing. It is not the only way to write, nor is it the only way I can write. It is one piece of my writing process, a powerful part, which as a gun, gets me writing every time I go, no matter what else is happening in my writing life.

Writing needs to breathe;
writers need to know when to take a breath.

If I had this group pointed at my head every day, I'd write more and for longer periods of time. It is still hard to face the demons. That is not to say I'm like O'Connor's grandmother, who under the gun becomes desperate, ingratiating, and false. Nor do I mean to imply that without that gun at my temple, I would never see the difference between who I am and who I could be. In fact, my "gun" creates the opposite effect for me; under it, I am my most honest writing self. I don't hear, "Write or you'll die!!" My life doesn't depend on it. The result is about freedom and joy and a process I know is guiding me, teaching me how to experience this freedom and self-knowledge every time I write. Under that gun anything can happen and usually does.

First, the freewriting in this group is just that — free writing, freely writing, writing free of criticism, unedited writing. It is accepted wholly for what it is in those 45 minutes, by the group, by me. Whatever I do is perfect for that time. Knowing this, I'm letting go of my critical self, the tape recorder inside which wonders if the writing's good enough, if it sounds stupid, if it's believable. The one that wonders why I'm even doing this. As I continue to have valuable experiences in this group, I welcome whatever endlessly waits in me to be expressed. I feel safe to try anything when I write; I write for writing's sake. I am not judged during this time. I do not judge myself.

Second, I love the process of creating. Recently, I heard Grace Paley answer the following question at a reading: Do you like to write, or do you like having written? I love to write when it's the beginning stages, the beginnings where anything can happen. I love writing quickly — the thoughts and ideas forming just under my surface of consciousness, the words streaming out as if I'm not guiding them at all. I love reading that last sentence, the one I just wrote down, the one that is a little gift because I don't know where it came from, but really I do, only I didn't know it was right there ready to make so much sense and power on the page. I like not thinking about form while writing. I like trusting that the ideas and words come out the way I need them to, and then the form follows. I like being surprised. To me, these moments are the most honest in my writing. I'm not trying to pull at a story section, to make it fall in line. I'm not trying to mold, I'm not trying to impress.

And, I like having written. I know this because we read to one another after we freewrite. I am always nervous, but I love hearing my writing out loud. When I hit one of those honest moments, I want to share it, and the group listens willingly. At this point, I don't need verbal responses, although we do tell what we like and why. Their responses are not about suggestion or advice. I need them to listen well. As I read aloud, I can tell from their body language and facial expressions what of my writing is immediately powerful and what is not. I can tell from the sound of my own voice. By being heard in the same moment that I create, I am learning to trust what it feels like when I write and read. With an audience, I am learning to hear myself.

Usually after we have all read, we segue into a dialogue about what happened for us in the writing. We talk about resistance and fear. We exchange ideas for reading. We talk about our own "next step." About the revision process. About publishing. We are a community. A quiet encouragement enters our meetings. It's the result of eight women writing furiously on the same topic during the same 45 minutes. Our collective energy supports us in the writing and the reading aloud, and we keep coming back for more. We are each on our own path, but we are all growing. In my private writing time, when I remember what it feels like to write freely, daringly, and urgently in this community, I remember to write for writing's sake, to write for the discovery of who I am, what I want to say, and how I can say it. And I trust the writing to take me where I need and want to go. I trust the process to thrive without that gun, that outside motivation. Indeed, I find the desire to write within, already there, poised, daring me to be a writer.

The Grandmother's lesson was too brief; she was rewarded no time to put to use all she'd learned while staring at that gun and her oppressor behind it. I am much luckier! The lesson is, pay attention. Listen to what the act of writing teaches. Write in order to learn how to write. Recognize my process in this group and trust what is happening right now in my writing life. Use this understanding in my teaching. I think this must be true for everyone.

One afternoon not too long ago, when I was finishing my last semester teaching English at a private high school, I was reminded of this again. Eric rarely participated in class. He wouldn't read aloud, write in response to the reading, or do homework, but he loved to freewrite; he is a writer. (He is also a reader; he borrowed a book of contemporary poets and came back the next day saying, "I really like that Rosemarie Waldrop!") Eric would write all period, one free poem after another full of imagery, powerful metaphors, and uncompromising descriptions about how he saw life. I underlined lines I particularly liked and gave his work back to him daily.

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Finally, I gave in to the pedagogue in me, that part that likes control and order, and I wrote on one poem, "Wonderful piece, but can you work to develop a larger meaning for the whole, work to pull all of the fragments together?" I handed him the page the next day and he immediately looked up and said, "What do you mean a larger meaning?" He wanted an answer. Something clicked in me. All at once, I thought of my group, what the writing there had taught me. I understood that what I was learning from writing in this group right now in my life could also be true for him—he had already begun; he was writing, and maybe he wasn't ready to "pull all of the fragments together." Like me, if he continued to write, just write freely and a lot, perhaps the writing would take him where he next needs to go. I immediately answered him, "You know what, don't worry about that comment, in fact, don't pay any attention to it. You just keep doing what you're doing; it's great."

And I meant it. It came to me so clearly in that moment. If he keeps on writing, writing all those unique ideas and images in his way, he will eventually learn the stuff I thought I could teach him. If he keeps writing, he'll figure it out anyway. His writing will lead him to ask the questions when he's ready to hear the answers. The writing will teach him what he'll need to do next. Writing needs to breathe; writers need to know when to take a breath. Writing needs time to figure itself out. It's my job as teacher to set up the conditions for this kind of active learning and self-evaluation to take place alongside theory and elements of craft. A writer, especially a beginning writer, must have the freedom and encouragement inside or out, to write whatever he wants and needs to write.

But I am not the grandmother of O'Connor's story. I also hold the gun. Writing empowers the writer. I write and pay attention to what happens there in the moment, and then I know exactly what to do next.

I recently saw a DeKooning show, a retrospective of his art. Sitting in the museum, staring up at one of his earlier paintings (which I liked very much) I was suddenly struck by one bright, thick gob of red in the corner. There was no other like it on the canvas. And I thought, how did he know what to do and how to do it? The painting seemed so arbitrary. I accepted that I was studying a master of 20th century art, but how did he know to put that streak right there? How did he know it was right?

I suppose I was having an epiphany of sorts. Maybe he did just know, but I think what really happens is process. There are art and creative energy and inspiration, and hours and days and years of doing it again and again and again. There are knowledge, instinct, and trust. The work taught him what to do.

I moved from room to room, through one period of his art to the next, and I marveled at how the work changed and illustrated a new period of his artistic vision, each period representing what the previous work taught. The artist moves in and through the work as it shows him what to do next. The artist is in motion.

I was struck in that moment, realizing again, that for much of my creative life as a musician and then a teacher, I have been governed by the need to know I am doing the thing right.

My experiences thus far as a writer of fiction are contradicting this pattern. While writing in my writers' group I dare myself to write whatever I want. I take chances and face fear and intimidation and because I do this, I leave the group with new ideas, new inspiration, new confidence, and a desire to write again. I want to write again.

I wanted to know DeKooning's secret for putting red paint on that canvas. I wanted to know who told him to paint like that, who was holding the gun to keep him at it. There is no secret; the process is more organic than that. It's about listening and trusting self.

You have to write in order to learn how to write. Countless writers and teachers tell us this. They describe why they write, how they write, what it feels like when they don't want to write. And they tell us if we want to be writers, we simply have to face down the irrepressible demons and do it. Just do it. I have begun by writing in a group. A group of equally inspired, devoted, busy, professional women who are often, still, my gun when I am discouraged, when I am not writing. But I am not the grandmother of O'Connor's story. I also hold the gun. Writing empowers the writer. I write and pay attention to what happens there in the moment, and then I know exactly what to do next.

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Getting Dirty

by Dawn Haines

I have a friend who gets me dirty. I don't go to her intending to get that way, but I always leave stained. I don't have to look for the marks. They will surface. A deep smudge on my tan sandals where the suede is shiny and goes in the wrong direction. Chocolate smeared on my T-shirt sleeve. Powdery dirt mixed with slobber on my feet and my crotch. One of her dogs managed to get that far. Even my hair is different when I leave. It falls around my face and it feels thinner. I touch it too much. I go to this place clean and well dressed, matching, but I know once I'm there, something will come undone.

Her dogs and babies are dirty too. The Lab, the German shepherd, the mutt, all three of them at me the second my feet touch the loose dirt of her driveway, this day after rain. The one year old, snotty, messed, displaying more than just today's lunch. I want to know if it's irresponsible not to wash him more often. He reaches for her as I enter the side screen door. He reaches up and I can feel myself recoil. Solid and intact, perhaps this time I will repel the dust, the baby's dried food, the dog hair I can clearly see against the burgundy futon cover.

My friend pulls him up and swings around to embrace me. She is layers of musk and hard work. If I licked her arm, I'd taste salt. When I moved to the desert, this desert my friend lives in, I stopped wearing make-up. She never goes without it.

I don't explore the desert, not alone. She takes me. She walks through cacti, bushes, points out javelina tracks, What? . . I whisper, and she snickers. She's educating me, and I'm teaching her about my fear. What do we do if we come across a javelina? She neither reproaches nor derides me, but rather delights in my innocence. But I am afraid.

I don't recognize myself when I am with this friend. I walk alongside of her through winter and spring desert with my hands in my pockets. When I'm with her I don't know what to do with my hands. My words are not attached at all to what I am thinking during these times, but they keep coming, and I always think afterwards, it was me - unveiled. Exposed. Raw. I think, it's that layer of nervousness which makes one so aware of words and body parts and breathing.

She's arguing with the eleven year old, the one old enough to know better. Then she grabs her baby boy and launches herself into the dying day. She walks into the desert of the Tucson mountains barefoot, in a thin, colorless cotton dress, baby swinging off her left hip. Her feet solidly hit the gravel chips and rocks of the road and I wince for her. She swings the baby up onto her shoulders and he gurgles, squawks, grins wide. We enter a harmless sunset, and my edges soften as those of the Tucson range become more distinct and one dimensional in the diminishing light.

In the desert, I gingerly walk among the low cacti - no, I cannot name them - watching for god knows what will sting me, strike me, prick me at any wrong step. My friend can name them all, and does so as I say, what is that glorious smell? Or then, as her child reaches for one and she coos to him, never alarmed, Not the Palo Verde, not the Palo Verde. We walked behind him, alongside of him, and he didn't cross danger's threshold once.

She, however, sinks her foot into something fuzzy on one end, sharp thorns on the other. Stuck in her foot. She laughs and pulls her foot up behind her, asks me to remove it. Only you - I say- Only you in the desert shoeless. Pull it out! she wails. I want to say something. I like saving her. Hurry up! comes next, and I pull it out. One thorn sticks me deep in my thumb. It burns immediately, and as we continue to walk, I fight the temptation to ask her why it burns and what exactly it is that has lodged itself in our flesh. But she already knows I am afraid.

She said to me once on one of these walks, that if you put what you need out there and really believe in it, it will come to you. Says this because she has a story, every time I come to her, of some dream realized, some serendipitous event, some kindness dealt her which significantly affects her life. She gets what she wants. Her life looks this way to me. I imagine this is living.

I see her bare feet and I see her dirty child. I walk into and sit down in her house's dust and grime, and I do it against my nature - the one that likes everything in its place, the one that likes clothes to match and body parts to stay clean, the one that likes it safe - and I do it willingly. I get dirty.

We circle back and the sun is nearly gone. We're on the gravel road again, slowly moving up between houses on our left and right. A couple of cars drive along, one slows, a man driver- and I watch him the entire time he passes us. Suddenly a dog behind a fence barks at the tires against gravel, and I jump. I jump and she laughs like a sneeze, like she had no control over it whatsoever.

I have a friend who gets me dirty. I think she wants to. I think she wants me to live.

When I get home I don't look for the marks. I unlock my empty house and feel the pull of the television, the phone, the refrigerator. It stinks in here, and I quickly head for the trash. I'm taking out the trash, and in that moment when I could go in any direction, I decide, yes, I will clean the kitchen, I'll clean and put some order into my life, and as I

See **DIRTY** *p. 26*

Behind the "barred windows": The Imprisonment of Women's Bodies and Minds in Nineteenth-Century America

by Michelle Mock Murton

> How shall I so cramp, stunt,
> simplify, and nullify myself
> as to make me eligible to the
> honor of being swallowed up
> into some little man?
>
> —Anna Julia Cooper (1892)[1]

While a multitude of women in the mid- to late-nineteenth century brought suffrage to the forefront of society as a means to equal rights, many others involved in the women's movement realized that political enfranchisement alone would not bring women to an equitable socioeconomic footing with men. Key impediments to women's equality were patriarchal ideologies and pronouncements which encumbered women's bodies, adversely affecting their physical and mental health, simultaneously relegating middle and upper-class white women to an inferior status. Male-controlled realms such as fashion, publishing, medicine, psychiatry, and education collectively encouraged society to embrace "sick-making" conventions such as the corset, encumbering dress, enforced invalidism, and skewed notions of female anatomy which in effect imprisoned nineteenth-century American women within their bodies. Consequently, to encumber woman's body is to encumber her mind. This phenomenon is not entirely dissimilar to the twentieth-century chimera which created social diseases for women such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa.[2] Then, as today, women activists found misogynist ideologues so detrimental to women's survival that there was no recourse but to counter them.

German theorist and theologian Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendal aptly notes in her 1995 text, *I Am My Body*, that historically, "women are seismographs for changes in culture, and their bodies are the places where conflicts become unmistakably evident" (9). In a burgeoning industrialized and teleologized patriarchy, women were judged solely as a sex rather than as persons constituting one half of humanity. So coerced were nineteenth-century American women into gender-imprisoning conventions that Charlotte Perkins Gilman vehemently proclaimed: "So utterly has the status of woman been accepted as a sexual one that it has remained for the women's movement of the nineteenth century to devote much contention to the claim that women are persons! That women are persons as well as females,—an unheard of proposition!" (577).

Contemporary historian Ben Barker-Benfield suggests that men's fear and hostility toward the female body motivated them to create gendered constructs to demonstrate that women, because of the very nature of their bodies and minds, were inherently weak (Showalter 95). To relegate women to an inferior status and to label them as the "weaker sex" reduced women's threat to masculinity. According to Eliza Archard, women, "like sheep," were so coerced by male-created ideologies about women's alleged physical and mental frailties that they came to see these constructed weaknesses as a virtue and "strength" of their sex (1). Not surprisingly, many reformers rebelled against such subversive inversions, urging other women to do the same.

Social activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw that nineteenth-century fashions, with their encumbrances, effectively imprisoned women. Fashions, she wrote,

> perfectly. . .describe [woman's] condition for. . .everything she wears has some object external to herself. The comfort and convenience of the woman is never considered, from the bonnet string to the paper shoe, she is the hopeless martyr to the inventions of some Parisian imp of fashion. Her tight waist and long trailing skirts deprive her of all freedom of breath and motion. No wonder man prescribes her sphere. She needs his help at every turn. (119)

As Stanton argued, numerous fashion conventions imprisoned women's body through outward attire, hindered physical and mental health, and altered societal notions of women's "natural" body. Thus, these encumbrances enclosed women, often rendering them passive and dependent within a relegated sphere.

As the century waned, Stanton, Gilman, and many other women, envisioned and worked for the world which awaited them beyond the barred windows. Together, they worked to build a less restrictive world, not only for themselves, but for all of humanity.[3] A positive activist who called herself a "humanist," Gilman wrote in *Women and Economics*: "What we do modifies us more than what is done to us. The freedom of expression has been more restricted in women than the freedom of impression, if that be possible. Something of the world she lived in she has seen from her barred windows" (580).

Gilman and others fought against what Ann Wood has termed a "domestication of death" which imprisoned women as a sex and which was expressed in virtually every sphere (Gilbert 25). For example, in the literary realm, the domestication of death became so pervasive, physically and intellectually, that women's embodiment became doubly circumscribed. The theoretical delight in women's actual deaths and their death-like passivity nearly reached the level of the

sublime in Edgar Allan Poe's "Philosophy of Composition" which dictates that "unquestionably the most poetic topic" is the "death of a beautiful woman" (1463). Poe's raven's insistent refrain of "never more" may be viewed as patriarchy's answer as to when women would receive equality. Poe's "never more" is the American prototype to Milton's patriarchal, restrictive "bogey" applied to imprison English women. Exactly three decades later, in *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf would defend women against misogynist ideologues much as Gilman did across the shore, using quintessentially the same metaphorical analogy of imprisonment and "barred windows" to describe women's restricted view and place in patriarchal society by declaring that women must "look past Milton's bogey, for no human being should shut out the view" (32). Ironically, according to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in her 1889 autobiography *Eighty Years and More*, Susan B. Anthony, like Woolf later, presented a countervoice against Poe's raven and Milton's bogey. Stanton wrote: "She [Anthony] still never loses an occasion to defend coeducation and prohibition, and solves every difficulty with the refrain, woman suffrage, as persistent as the 'never more' of Poe's raven" (168). Despite men's attempts to imprison women as a sex, Stanton and others chose to fight for liberty and equality, thereby rejecting death, intellectual or otherwise.

Certainly, women's attire was a definite hazard to women's health and an impetus to invalidism. In her 1873 text, *What to Wear?* Elizabeth Stuart Phelps revealed the deadly truth behind colloquialisms that denoted fashionably attired women. "It has ceased to be a metaphor," Phelps noted of the well-dressed woman, "that she is dressed to kill'" (18) Phelps saw conventions of embodiment as insidious habits to be fixed, to attract their distinct attention. There never was a serpent that did not hide and crawl under foot" (76). So extreme and prominent were these conventions that women came to believe their strength virtually relied upon their weaknesses, complying and enslaving themselves to keep up with fashion. In "Home Truths," the January 15, 1868, edition of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's suffragette paper, *The Revolution*, Eliza Archard's latest text, *Herald of Health*, was quoted profusely. Archard railed against the notion of invalidism enforced upon supplicating and complicitious women:

> Woman's weakness indeed!. . .And what more claim to our admiration has a woman who, in a manner, paralyzes herself, and starves every drop of good, red blood out of her body? The lovely creatures who choke the breath out of themselves, eat chalk and pickles, and drink vinegar, are to be counted by the hundred. . .So ground into the souls of women is this notion of the exceeding beauty of woman's weakness, that there are those who think it isn't pretty to exert every scanty strength they have. (1)

Helen Gilbert Ecob, whose 1892 study, *The Well-Dressed Woman*, outlines the debilitating physical, psychological, and moral effects of fashion, echoed Archard's views. "Alas for a people whose power lies in weakness!" Ecob despaired (20). Advocating equal rights for women in all realms, Ecob inverted the essentializing notion of "true womanhood," emphasizing strength instead of weakness; she perceived physical reformation as women's only means of escaping her genteel imprisonment. Ecob believed that "since physical weakness handicaps woman's activities, bars the way to higher education and hinders the development of many noble traits of character, it follows that an important step in the attainment of true womanhood lies in the direction of physical reformation" (23).

In his 1851 lecture entitled *Women's Rights*,"Wendell Phillips despaired over societal domestications of death and invalidism which encouraged women to grow more pallid and passive in their hot-house domestic spheres while in the "outside" world, their husbands/fathers/brothers developed physical manifestations of economic prosperity, increasing girths and ruddying complexion. Regarding the "woman question," Phillips foregrounded the maternal, one of the essences of the "true woman," noting "I will not enlarge now on another most important aspect of this question, the value of the contemplated change in a physiological point of view. Our dainty notions have made woman such a hot-house plant, that one half the sex are invalids. The mothers of the next generation are invalids...But I leave this sad topic for other hands"(29)

Other feminists took up the cause. In *The Well-Dressed Woman*, Ecob diligently addressed the notion of women's enforced invalidism. Noting the effects of a weakened body on the mind, Ecob reminded her readers that these were ideological constructs, not inherent traits of the sex. Male ideologies supported and encouraged fashions and behaviors that imprisoned women; indeed, these men and women who slavishly carried out their ideologies created a domesticated death for women. Ecob noted:

> Invalidism or semi-invalidism is the rule. Even a condition of passive health, or the absence of active disease, is seldom seen. Health in its highest sense, which signifies exuberance of spirit and both vital and moral energy, is almost unknown. The decline from strength to weakness has been so gradual that we have been hardly conscious of the process, and weakness is accepted as a legitimate condition. To assert that this state of invalidism is preordained for the female race is an impeachment of Divine justice. We are forced to the belief that it is the result of false principles and methods of liv-

ing.(15)

To demystify patriarchal ideology, Ecob felt, was the only means to advance women's equal rights. She quoted Dr. Dio Lewis who agreed with her: "The popular notion that the ill-health of our women is natural must be overcome"(16).

Undoubtedly, the greatest danger to women's health was the corset, a patriarchal cage Phelps nominalized as "that strait-jacket—worthy of an invention of an Alva" (19). The corset distorted and deformed woman's natural body, transforming the female body into an hour-glass figure, a grotesquely exaggerated symbol of fertility, reproductivity, and nurturing specularized for patriarchal gaze. To raise the bust and to enlarge the stomach resulted in compressed organs in the abdominal area, reducing the woman's waist to a minuscule circumference. This distortion of women's physical proportions deformed and damaged internal organs. Woman's breathing was so severely affected that as Phelps noted, "her lungs contract and ache, and her breath comes in uneasy gasps" (19). The corseted woman breathlessly spoke, as Isabella Bird noted, in the "weak, rapid accents of consumption" (183). Indeed, in the fifteenth century (when corsets were composed of steel and had busks of wood), a physician of the period linked the breathless corset-wearer to the consumptive. Corseted women, he claimed, "purchase a stinking breath.. and open a door into consumptions" (qtd. in Ecob 109).

The nineteenth-century corset, often comprised of whalebones and laces, reduced the waist anywhere from "three to fifteen inches," its extreme pressure impairing lung capacity and pushing other organs downward (Ecob 26-7). Dr. Robert L. Dickinson estimated that the corset's continual pressure was as "few" as thirty-five pounds of pressure from a loose corset to a greater pressure of eighty-eight pounds; this oppression was inflicted upon a woman throughout all her waking hours (28). In addition to impaired breathing, the corset also adversely affected the liver and heart. Indeed, "tight-lace liver" became a common occurrence among corseted women. Autopsies showed livers so altered in shape and so completely lacerated due to tight lacing that serrations from the lacing cut a furrow into the liver deeply enough to cut the organ nearly in two (Ecob 63). Further, pressure from the corset impaired the heart's capacity to measure blood flow. Undoubtedly, nineteenth-century ladies' "swooning" occurred as a result of restricted blood flow, not from romantic ideals. The spine, too, was affected by daily corset wearing.4 Ecob quotes Dr. Trall who saw "[s]pinal distortion [as] one of the ordinary consequences of lacing." Trall warned that "No one who laces habitually can have a straight or strong back. The muscles being unbalanced become flabby or contracted, unable to support the trunk of the body erect, and a curvature, usually a double curvature, of the spine is the consequence" (46). Not surprisingly, when a woman decided to discard her corsets for emancipation, her undisciplined muscles and over-exerted organs rebelled. Phelps warned her readers to beware, for initially, "a greater sense of discomfort grows upon you" after the corset is first abandoned (79). After escaping imprisonment, Phelps incites her readers to burn their corsets and not deceive themselves with false philanthropy, giving "in the sacred name of charity" the hateful object to another woman, enslaving her in the very "chains from which you have yourself escaped" (78). "Yes!" Margaret Fuller cried in her 1845 polemic *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, "let us give up all artificial means of distortion. Let life be healthy, pure, all of a piece" (164). Certainly, physical health was not the sole issue at hand. To discard the corset was to gain emancipation and autonomy. Ecob recognized "[d]eep breathing as a powerful psychical force" (61), and Phelps believed that while a woman "breathes, she thinks, suspects" (30).

Compounding weight in conjunction with the corset to women's already overburdened frame were the heavy, starched muslin and flannel petticoats worn beneath long, trailing skirts (which accumulated the additional weight of mud throughout the day). In addition, tight collars and garters to hold up hose threatened to cut off circulation. Tight-waisted clothing with thick, heavily corded waists, often worn by young girls, were marked as "incipient corsets" by Ecob and others (132). Ecob knew that physically restrictive wear was also restrictive of autonomy and independence. To encumber woman's body was also to encumber her mind. Ecob reasoned that confining attire "is a moral loss not simply because it cripples the working power of the brain, but because it makes the mind ever conscious of the body, 'by reason of its uncomfortableness'" (236).

While corsets distorted the bodily image of woman, woman's body in itself was viewed as suspect. The embodiment of "woman" continued to see women's bodies as a dark continent in an alien world—particularly in the realm of reproduction. "Misplaced ovaries" caused a "great deal of trouble" to women's health, according to Dr. S. W. Mitchell, the nineteenth-century neurospecialist made famous for his infamous "rest cure" for the "hysteric" woman, one of whom was Charlotte Perkins Gilman.5 Myths regarding women's menstrual process often served as a guise for misogynist and enslaving techniques. One famous menstrual myth appears with startling regularity in controversies over co-education in colleges and universities. Elaine and English Showalter note that in 1873 Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard College published a work entitled *Sex in Education* in which he argued that higher education was destroying the reproductive functions of women by overworking them during a crucial time in their formative years. Supporting Clarke's thesis, Mitchell pointedly noted the case of "Miss C." in his medical treatise entitled *Nervous Diseases*, a text devoted primarily to women. "Miss C.," a seventeen-year old, "lost" her menstrual cycle while attending (Mitchell pointedly reminds his readers) a

"school in which boys and girls were educated together." Prior to attending the coeducational academy, the young woman's menstrual cycles, Mitchell claims, had been "regular." Once she was sent home, however, her menstrual flow miraculously returned in but a few short weeks and the young woman's health was gradually restored (96). Sadly, her educational process was not. Note that despite protestations of concern for feminine health and well-being,

Mitchell endorsed the notion of women's physical inferiority. In "Doctor and Patient" (1904), Mitchell expressed concern over the "grave risks" to health and life chanced by young women willing to "risk injury" through scholastic endeavors enjoyed by their male peers (149). Not content simply to relegate women's physicality to a weakened and inferior realm, Mitchell, a well-educated man who published a plethora of medical texts as well as fictional narratives, also espoused what he perceived to be women's mental and intellectual inferiority to man. Between the male and female intellect, Mitchell wrote, "there is difference, both quantitative and in a measure qualitative, I believe, nor do I think any educational change in generations of women will ever set her, as to certain mental and moral qualifications, as an equal beside the man" ("Doctor and Patient" 138).

Much of "woman's weakness," both physical and intellectual, was attributed to her reproductive system. Certainly George Henry Lewes conflated values to facts when he explained why, in 1852, women were unlikely to be great writers. Referring to then-unmarried, and consequently childless, women writers such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte, Lewes believed:

> For twenty of the best years of their lives—those very years in which men either rear the grand fabric or lay the solid foundations of their fame and fortune—women are mainly occupied by the cares, the duties, the enjoyments, and the sufferings of maternity. During large parts of these years, too their bodily health is generally so broken and precarious as to incapacitate them for any strenuous exertion. (qtd. in Showalter 43)

And Charles D. Meigs, in his 1851 text, *Woman: Her Diseases and Remedies*, questioned the notion of "woman" as artist, labeling her creative aspirations as an aberration—a crime against man and nature:

> Do you think that a woman, who can produce a race and modify the whole fabric of society, would have developed in the tender soil of her intellect, the strong idea of Hamlet, or a Macbeth...Such is not woman's providence, nature, power, or mission. (50)

Myths regarding menstruation and women's reproductive system endorsed and virtually enforced women's embodiment as the weaker sex in both physical and intellectual realms. From 1840 to the early 1900's, the psychiatric establishment went so far as to posit a direct and causal connection between women's reproductive organs and insanity. In "The Weaker Vessel: Legal Versus Social Reality in Mental Commitments in Nineteenth-Century New York," Ellen Dwyer argues that nineteenth-century physicians, fearful of the female reproductive system, perceived that women's "susceptibility to endometriosis and cervical ulceration increased women's susceptibility to insanity" (95). Dwyer goes on to point out that in its "most extreme form," the correlation between the feminine reproductive system and insanity encouraged a faction of physicians to perform hysterectomies and clitorectomies as a means of restoring mental health (95). Certainly the author of a late nineteenth-century article entitled "The Usefulness of Spaying" indicates a fear of the female anatomy; he attempted to persuade peers among the medical profession to adopt his oppressive techniques, despite the "prevalen[ce] among crudely educated minds that the ovaries are organs of social necessity and economic importance" (qtd. in Dwyer 95). This writer argues that the ovaries, while important for a brief period in a woman's life and important for the propagation of the human race, were in general, the basis for much racial, domestic, and individual distress and should be removed (Dwyer 96).

Despite the gendered constructs which dictated and enforced domesticated death and its resulting physical, intellectual, and mental weakness upon nineteenth-century "woman," virtually imprisoning her both body and mind, enough women broke through these barred windows, becoming, in a sense, societal outlaws. Margaret Fuller could empathize with the plight of collective activists: "Such beings as these, rich in genius, of most tender sympathies, capable of high virtue and chastened harmony, ought not to find themselves, by birth, in a place so narrow, that, in breaking bonds, they become outlaws" (75). Inscribed as "outlaws," women such as Stanton, Gilman, Phelps, Ecob, and others resisted the cage of fashion and convention, encouraging emancipation for others, so that all could behold a view and place in society.

1. Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman from the South*, p. 70. Cooper, as many women reformers, foregrounds the essential of "true woman's" maternity as a legitimizing force for reformation. However, Cooper's multiplicitous subject positioning offers her readers variant positioning which traverses centers and margins from the subjectivity of race and gender.

2. The practice of inscribing fluctuating societal values and cultural conflicts upon the female body has plagued Western culture's matrilineage for centuries. Undoubtedly, the similarities between late-twentieth-century American women and their nineteenth-century predecessor's cojoined obsession with bodily image are plentiful. However, variant dissimilarities do exist. While nineteenth-century women adhered to the standard of the "hour-glass" figure and mutilated their bodies in an attempt to "naturalize" this ideal, their period neither established nor adhered to the pursuit

of thinness as late twentieth-century Western, industrialized cultures have done. For a more detailed examination regarding the historical context and cultural values of anorexia nervosa and bulimia, see Roberta P. Said's *Too 'Close to the Bone': The Historical Context for Women's Obsession with Slenderness* in Fallon, Patricia, et. al. Feminist Perspectives on Eating Disorders. New York: Guilford, 1994.

3. Rebecca Harding Davis, Fanny Fern, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Anna Julie Cooper, and Dorthea Dix are but a few of the women too numerous to explore in depth here, who, while not affiliated directly with the Women's Suffrage Movement but with other movements such as dress reform, sanitarium reform, the temperance movement, or simply literary denouncements, directly influenced the women's rights movement with their works and voice.

4. The corset not only affected the wearer, but also the woman's children. Many women wore corsets throughout their pregnancy in order to appear more "respectable" during their time of internment. And for pregnant women who did not, their musculature had already been grossly affected by years of corset wearing and their expulsive power in childbirth would be drastically weakened. Ecob quotes numerous physicians who implicate corset wearing with childbirth cases (43-4).

5. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) is a fictionalized account denouncing Mitchell's "cure," its debilitating effect upon women, and patriarchal society's devaluation of half of its population. Although Gilman was an active advocate of women's rights, a prolific writer of a multitude of genres devoted to women's socio-political rights, and a well-known lecturer, her short story is an exceptional example to illustrate the reformatory praxis evident in nineteenth-century American women's literature.

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DIRTY, *continued from p. 21*

walk out through the living room, I click on the new 13 inch color TV I bought last week.

Now there is no sun, and I walk to the dumpster. There is no skyline, nothing, not even an outline of the Catalinas I won't know are there until tomorrow. In the dark, I'm always trying to make Tucson be someplace else. I walk slowly back to the house and have already tried the knob several times when I realize I've locked myself out. I almost have to laugh. I go to the living room side and look in - the long sleek green sofa, the washed out yellow of the rug, the coffee table, the TV wildly getting no one's attention, and I think - there's nothing of value in there. I'm scouting out the place and there's nothing of value in there.

I stare at the skeleton of my days and nights without me in there, and I know it's my life in there, the valuables, and I've locked myself out. I've locked myself out.

RETIRED, *continued from p. 4*

p.m., then realizing that you don't have to get up in the morning and that if you could read until midnight and finish the novel, no one will be the wiser. (This realization is especially pleasurable on a Sunday night.)

A friend in another discipline made up copies of a handout he gave to people when they asked about his retirement. On it, he indicated he was retiring because, after 33 years of teaching, " . . . if I have to make up and grade another exam, I'll go crazy." I am thankful--daily--that I don't have to go to meetings. I went to a meeting of the annuitants of the University, a local organization for retired staff and faculty that's part of a state-wide organization. It seemed to me after about an hour of what portended to be a day-long meeting that this was an organization for people who miss having meetings to go to. I felt particularly adult as I walked out in the middle of the first session. I have met my hours of required purgatory in meetings.

A good friend, 14 years older than me and the first Ph.D. I directed, retired several years ago. She wrote me:

> Retirement, as you have observed, brings new dimensions of physical and intellectual freedom. I see so many younger, brilliant friends struggling against barriers that crumble with retirement, barriers that may be professional or personal or both. This, I think, is especially the case with women. Because a woman is committed to her own intellectual growth, some people expect her to be frigid, humorless, and hairy-legged. She is pressured to conform to the expectations of others. Often a woman feels unable to claim her independence, especially during a period that has become synonymous with exploring the boundaries of individual freedom. It results in a high degree of personal frustration with which she cannot always cope. And so, she often seeks a man to pin her fear and anger and exhaustion on. Independence [is] tantamount to intimidation rather than challenge and opportunity for growth and self-assertion. Claims that a father, son, husband, or lover "has ruined my life" [are] a denial of one's own responsibility for his/her own fulfillment.

My friend went on to comment that retirement allows time for such considerations to gel. Retirement gives us the time to look back and ". . . recognize the innocuous happenings on which we wasted so much psychic energy and permits us to relax and redirect our energies."

The book with the marvelous title *When I Grow Old, I Shall Wear Purple* says it all, especially to women. Now, in the late twentieth century, with life expectancies growing older and older, not to plan for one's retirement and not to see retirement as an opportunity for growth is to doom oneself to unhappiness and frustration. I'm now working part-time as a consultant, training on-the-job scientists on how to write up reports of their research for in-house and regulatory agency approval. I'm simply taking the skills and talents I developed as a teacher and applying them in another setting.

Retirement, like commencement, is a signal of the beginning of a new and exciting life. Retirement is a joyful and happy time, perhaps the happiest time in life. I awake each morning with a full agenda and find I have to write notes to myself (much as I did when teaching full-rime) to help me keep track of what I hope to do each day.

"Is there life after retirement?" is probably the wrong question. For me, retirement has been and is becoming so fulfilling that I will probably soon be asking myself, "Was there life before retirement?"

LOST, *continued from p. 12*

the "irons" of the text, the teacher, and any monolithic structure, and perhaps, by the end of the semester, a little more free of the "dead father" of conventional pedagogy.

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Book Review *of* NELLIE BLY *by Brooke Kroeger*

Random House, Inc. New York, 1994. Paperback, $16.00

"Nellie Bly (1864-1922) was the best reporter in America," wrote Arthur Brisbane in his column in the *New York Evening Journal* on the occasion of her death. Brooke Kroeger, a UPI reporter and editor, tells the reader why Bly deserved such an accolade in a biographical narrative that details the courageous life of a world famous reporter who opened the doors of journalism for women. Kroeger researched court records, memoirs, and historical archives to complete the first fully documented biography on Bly, a multidimensional feminist who grew up without privilege or higher education. Kroeger notes that Bly's formula for success was: "Determine Right. Decide Fast. Apply Energy. Act with Conviction. Fight to the Finish. Accept the Consequences. Move on" (Kroeger, 1994, p. XIV).

Bly took her own advice as a beginning reporter for *The Pittsburgh Dispatch* and later as a front page reporter for *The New York World* and *The New York Evening Journal*, pioneering the development of "detective" journalism, the beginning of investigative reporting. Her news stories and columns often focused on the plight of the unfortunate, notably unwed, indigent mothers and their children. Early in her career, she feigned insanity and had herself committed to a mental asylum in order to publicly expose the horrible conditions of the facilities. Later, Bly spent time in the homeless women's shelters in an effort to report accurately on the dire conditions of the women who lived there.

Bly's interest in women's lives, their roles, and their rights continued to dominate her writing. One of her most interesting interviews was with Susan B. Anthony, the leader of the Women's Suffrage movement. Bly talked with Anthony about the subjugation of Cuba and Spain and the talk of US intervention to win Cuba's independence, as well as other national and global issues. Perhaps, though, Bly's personal questions to Anthony about love, marriage, were most revealing.

"Were you ever in love?"

"In love?" she laughed merrily. "Bless you, Nellie, I've been in love a thousand times."

"Really?" I gasped, taken aback by this startling confession.

"Yes, really!" nodding her snowy head. "But I never loved anyone so much that I thought it would last. In fact, I never thought I could give up my life of freedom to become a man's housekeeper. When I was young if a girl married poor, she became a housekeeper and drudge. If she married wealthy, she became a pet and a doll. Just think, had I married at 20, I would have been a drudge or a doll for 55 years. Think of it."

"I want to add one thing," she said. "Once men were afraid of women with ideas and a desire to vote. Today, our best suffragists are sought in marriage by the best class of men."

"Do you pray?"

"I pray every single second of my life. I never get on my knees of anything like that, but I pray with my work. My prayer is to lift women to equality with men. Work and worship are one with me. I know there is no God of the universe made happy by my getting down on my knees and calling him 'great.'"

"True marriage, the real marriage of soul, when two people take each other on terms of perfect equality, without the desire of one to...make the other subservient. It is a beautiful thing. It is the highest state of life. But for a woman to marry a man for support is a demoralizing condition. And for a man to marry a woman merely because she has a beautiful figure or face is a degradation" (Kroeger,1994, p. 284).

While WILLA readers will be interested in Bly's feminist reporting, they will appreciate Kroeger's account of Bly as an industrialist whose company manufactured the first successful steel barrel produced in the United States, whose factories were models of social welfare for her 1,500 employees. Bly will be remembered as the most famous woman journalist of her day, an early industrialist, and a notable humanitarian.

Reviewed by Jeanne Gerlach

COLLEGE, *continued from p. 4*

Recent lawsuits have finally gotten the attention of some school systems. For example, Minnesota requires school systems to write strong sexual harassment policies that include approaches for dealing with student-to-student incidents. That state is also piloting an elementary school sexual harassment awareness program. Such early intervention programs are necessay not only because sexually harassing behaviors are occurring at younger ages but also such behaviors once established are more difficult to change.

The National Education Association Professional Library (P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516; 1-800-229-4200) has books, videos, and other materials that can help teacher educators and school systems. One such program, "Crossing the Line," presents video vignettes as the basis for discussion and for learning strategies to respond to sexual harassment. Other programs have developed procedures for "victims" to confront in writing their student harassers. Regardless of the program, teachers can take three immediate steps: don't ignore sexual harassment; model good behavior; and confront harassers, telling them such behavior is unacceptable and illegal (Title IX explicitly states that sexual harassment is illegal). Learning cannot take place in a hostile environment, and teachers must come to believe that making their classrooms free of student-to-student sexual harassment is a necessary part of creating a good learning environment.

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